

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM.



Department of Historical
and
Antiquarian Studies

BULLETIN NO. 2

With an Introduction by His Excellency

Sir Michael Keane, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., B.A.,
GOVERNOR OF ASSAM

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D.H.A.S.

By

S. K. BHUYAN, M.A., B.L.,

*Honorary Provincial Director,
D.H.A.S., Assam*

1934

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Mr. Probsthain's Letter to the D.H.A.S.

'Your valued letter, together with the first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, have just arrived, and I beg of you to accept my great appreciation for both. I have noticed, with considerable interest, within recent years the great advance in scholarship on sound European lines, in India, and in spite of it your Bulletin came as a great surprise to me, being of exceptionally high standard. The bibliographical work is absolutely perfect. I am looking forward to the second Bulletin, which you were good enough to mention would also be posted to me when ready'.—Arthur Probsthain. 41, Great Russell Street, London. March 23, 1933.



A Historian's Audience.

'The audience which the general historian should have in mind is that of historical experts—men who are devoting their lives to the study of history. Words of approval from them are worth more than any popular recognition, for theirs is the enduring praise. Their criticism should be respected; there should be unceasing effort to avoid giving them cause for fault-finding.'—Dr. James Ford Rhodes, author of 'The History of the United States, from 1850 to 1877'.

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PREFACE TO BULLETIN NO. 2.

The first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies was introduced to the world by His Excellency Sir Egbert Laurie Lucas Hammond, Governor of Assam, 1927-32. Our second Bulletin makes its appearance under similarly august auspices, being accompanied by the blessings of the present Governor of Assam, His Excellency Sir Michael Keane, in whom we have a friend as solicitous of our welfare as his predecessor in that exalted office. The encouragement of the Department's activities by two successive heads of the Province is impetus enough to its honorary workers and to students of Assam history.

This Bulletin is primarily a departmental report. But a résumé of the work of a humanistic organization like the D.H.A.S. is entitled to some latitude in treatment to escape from the customary frigidity of blue-books. Hence the canvas round the central picture has been splattered with a few animated touches to convey a proper impression of the atmosphere and background and of the luminous horizon in the far-off distance. In addition to the enumeration of our objects, activities and limitations, we have indicated the extensive possibilities of historical research in Assam, as well as the lines on which investigations should be conducted in order that they may receive the approbation of the critical world. We only hope that greater interest will rally round the activities of our Department and the cause of historical research in the Province. The reader should not lose sight of two important factors: our Department is in its formative period, recently emerged from the swaddling-cloths, and its Directorate can devote to it limited time which can be squeezed out of their professional pre-occupations; and the time fluctuates with the character and season of the legitimate duties which give them bread and sustenance.

Our Province enjoys an honoured position in the republic of letters for taking the lead in maintaining a Government department for the advancement of historical pursuits. Lt.-Col. Sir Wolsely Haig, the reputed editor of the third volume of *Cambridge History of India*, has, in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London, enjoined

upon other provinces of India to follow in the footsteps of Assam in pursuing the objects with which our Department is concerned. A leading periodical of Cuttack has specifically demanded that 'the new Orissa Government when created will immediately create such a department'. That will be a dark day in the history of Assam when a whisper will be raised to rob the Province, we love so well, of this unique prestige and dignity.

This Bulletin has come out on the eve of a great change in the life of the Department. Our work has elicited the generous response of our country's premier patron of literature and history.—Rai Bahadur Radhakanta Handiqui of Jorhat has made a novel and munificent donation to endow the Department with a building of its own to be named after his wife Mrs. Narayani Handiqui. As we have said elsewhere, 'we can reasonably expect that with Rai Bahadur Handiqui's example and inspiration at our command no cherished project of the Department will remain unfulfilled for want of financial assistance'.

In the retirement of Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck, our first Honorary Provincial Director, we have lost a wise and sympathetic friend to whom the interest of the Department was always a matter of moment in spite of his engrossment in highly responsible administrative duties. The appointment of Maulavi Abul Fazl Syed Ahmed as Honorary Assistant Director for the Brahmaputra Valley Division has placed at our disposal intensive and critical knowledge of the Islamic languages which will be helpful in elucidating and interpreting the Persian sources of the history of Assam.

I record with satisfaction the assistance rendered by members of the Department's staff, Srijut Basudev Misra, B.A., and Srijut Madhabchandra Barooah, in the compilation of this Bulletin.

Cotton College,
Gauhati, Assam.
February 23, 1934.

S. K. BHUYAN,

*Honorary Provincial Director of Historical and
Antiquarian Studies, Assam.*

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INTRODUCTION TO BULLETIN NO. 2

By His Excellency Sir Michael Keane, K.C.S.I.,
C.I.E., I.C.S., B.A., Governor of Assam.



THE interest aroused both within and without the Province of Assam by the publication of the first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies is amply illustrated by the appreciations quoted in the second Bulletin which itself contains a striking record of achievement. Despite the financial difficulties of the intervening period the Department has not only published several books of great interest to the student of Assam—among which Prof. S. K. Bhuyan's 'Tungkhungia Buranji' deserves special mention—but has broken a great deal of ground in the collection and preparation of numerous old manuscripts. Not the least proof of the Department's fair prospects for a long career of increasing utility is to be found in the promise, which it has secured so early in the day, of funds for a permanent home

from the generous hands of Rai Bahadur Radhakanta Handiqui.*

The services of the first Director, Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck, C.I.E., whose wise organization ensured so successful a beginning, have been lost by retirement, but in Prof. S. K. Bhuyan the Department has found a successor of unusual diligence and enthusiasm, with a capacity for making dry bones live. Under his guidance, and with the assistance of his corps of willing workers, I have every confidence that it will carry on the fair promise already shown, and will continue to attract the support, in labour and money, of all who have the storied past and the hopeful future of Assam at heart.

Government House,
SHILLONG,
15th February, 1934.

} M. KEANE,
Governor of Assam.

* After the above lines were written by His Excellency, Rai Bahadur Radhakanta Handiqui has, on February 19, 1934, delivered to the Government of Assam, a cheque for rupees ten thousand as donation for the erection of a permanent building for the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies.—S. K. B.

INTRODUCTION TO BULLETIN NO. 1.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY SIR EGBERT LAURIE LUCAS HAMMOND,
K.C.S.I., C.B.E., I.C.S., B.A. (OXON.), GOVERNOR OF ASSAM,
1927-1932.

The first bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, will, I hope, be followed in due course by many more. It should arouse interest in the past history of a very interesting province and, let us hope, induce others to follow in the footsteps of Sir Charles Lyall, Sir Edward Gait, Colonel Gurdon, Srijut Hemchandra Goswami, Rai Sahib Golapchandra Barua, Srijut Tarinicharan Bhattacharjee and others including Professor S. K. Bhuyan, the Honorary Assistant Director, to whose enterprise, encouraged by Mr. J. R. Cunningham, lately Director of Public Instruction, Assam, and Mr. A. W. Bentinck, C.I.E., the present Commissioner of the Assam Valley Division, this first publication is mainly due.

In Assam the preservation of the antique, whether in the shape of buildings or records is a difficult task. Jungle obliterates the traces of buildings which in the past housed notables: the climate destroys old records, containing the history of those who helped to make Assam what it is, and whose labours necessarily limit or expand our opportunities to-day.

The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies hopes to rescue as much as possible before the curtain of time drops and the movements of the actors are lost for good and all. It deserves the support of all sections of society whether in the supply of funds or in active assistance in research.

I wish the Department and its honorary workers every success.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
SHILLONG,
17th February, 1932.

} LAURIE HAMMOND.

PREFACE TO BULLETIN NO. 1.

This first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, represents our first attempt at publicity. The public are not much aware of what the Department is, what it is for and what it is doing, though in the meantime we have succeeded in consolidating its activities and acquiring the interest and sympathy of scholars and publicists alike. With the publicity now afforded to the aims and activities of the Department we hope to enter into a fresh lease of useful life with redoubled vigour and enthusiasm, attended by the helpful co-operation of those who seek to promote investigations into the past history of Assam which, in the words of the Calcutta University Commission, 'is a distinct province, with languages peculiar to itself, and with a distinctive set of economic, social and ethnological problems'.

The establishment of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies is the culminating factor of a long series of measures which the Government of Assam have, in spite of its limited resources, adopted from time to time, since the days of Major-General Francis Jenkins, for the advancement of the knowledge of the history and anthropology of the various races and peoples of the province. As far as we are aware ours is the only province in India which possesses a distinct Government department specifically entrusted with the pursuit of historical and antiquarian research, over and above the one engaged in ethnographical investigations. We only hope that this unique feature of our miscalled 'benighted province' will continue to be its pride and stay.

The Department owes its origin to the efforts of Mr. J. R. Cunningham, formerly Director of Public Instruction, Assam, who realized the vast possibilities of a Government

organization for the furtherance of research work as constituting the nearest approach to a University of which unfortunately we are devoid at present. The Department has received its letters patent from His Excellency Sir Egbert Laurie Lucas Hammond, Governor of Assam, during the administration of the educational portfolio by the Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Muhammad Saadulla, now Finance Member to the Government of Assam. The new features of His Excellency's regime fall within the legitimate bounds of political history. But the historical zeal of His Excellency maintained during a period of unprecedented disasters in the shape of floods, earthquakes and all-round economic distress, and manifested in the construction and equipment of an up-to-date fire-proof building at Shillong for the safe depositing of Government records, the initiation of measures for the compilation of a catalogue of the North-East Frontier Agency records of the Assam Secretariat, and the foundation of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, will ever be mentioned with grateful remembrance in the cultural annals of Assam. His Excellency has further evinced his keen interest in the promotion of historical research and in the well-being of the Department by contributing a foreword to this first Bulletin of ours for which the workers of the Department as well as students of Assam history are profoundly grateful.

COTTON COLLEGE,
GAUHATI, ASSAM. }
February 22, 1932.

S. K. BHUYAN,
*Honorary Assistant Director,
Department of Historical and
Antiquarian Studies, Assam.*

Rai Bahadur Handiqui's Donation.

Rai Bahadur Badhakanta Handiqui of Jorhat, Assistant Director of Land Records, Assam, retired, Proprietor of the Tirual Tea Estate, and formerly Member of the Assam Legislative Council, has paid to the Government of Assam a donation of rupees ten thousand for the erection of a permanent building for the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. The building will be situated in the vicinity of the Cotton College, Gauhati, and will be named 'Barapani Handiqui Historical Institute'. This generous and patriotic gift of Rai Bahadur Handiqui constitutes a distinct landmark in the cultural annals of Assam, and it worthily supplements the measures instituted by the Government of Assam for promoting investigations into the history and antiquities of the Province.

S. K. Bhuyan,

Gauhati, Assam.)
February 23, 1934.)

Honorary Provincial Director,
D.H.A.S., Assam.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL AND
ANTIQUARIAN STUDIES, ASSAM

BULLETIN NO. 2

PART I.

Historical Research in Assam.

1. 'PEERLESS ASSAM'.—No place-name has been subject to such variation in meaning and etiology as the term by which we designate our province. But the consensus of opinion is in favour of interpreting *Assam* or *Asama* as being equivalent to 'uneven' or 'peerless'. For uneven it is, undoubtedly, and its peerlessness has sprung from the unique possibilities emanating from the god-given combination of mountains and valleys. The vigour of our primitive tribes has served as a complement to the subtilty of the intellectual Aryans. The dwindling virility of the ease-loving plainsfolk has been reinforced by the elemental energy of the hillmen, whose muscles and sinews are at our eternal command whenever we project any enterprise of valour. The proper marshalling of these two elements of our population, and the rapprochement necessitated by their proximity and contact have permeated the culture, civilization, religion and society of the people of our province.

The natural resources of our province, its numerous rivers and streams, its fisheries, its petroleum and coal mines, its lime quarries, its virgin forests, combined with the richness and variety of its soil, constitute an economic asset of the highest importance. These different factors available for building up the wealth of the province, if properly utilized and explored, will earn for it the epithet of the Rising Sun in the East, speaking in terms of the Indian continent; and the old-time labels (and libels too) 'Benighted', 'Cinderella',

and 'Sleepy Hollow' will only accentuate the rapidness with which we shall climb the Everest of Glory.

2. ASSAM, A VIRGIN FIELD FOR RESEARCH.—

Assam is a small province on the north-east frontier of India. It has an area of 67,334 sq. miles, and a population of 9,247,857. Mountains, valleys, and rivers constitute its superficies; and someone appropriately suggested *Arva, Flumina, Montes*,—cultivated plains, rivers and mountains—as a motto for a coat-of-arms for the province.¹ Its population include highly enlightened Aryan races as well as most primitive hillmen presenting the different grades of civilization through which mankind have passed in order to reach their present culmination. Some of the hill-tribes—each divided into numerous septs and phratries—are still pursuing their primordial customs and manners, while others have accepted the humanizing processes of modern civilization. Assam has within its borders speakers of no less than 120 languages, Austric, Tibeto-Chinese, Dravidian and Indo-European; and each exercises a living vital force among the people to whom it belongs. To the student of anthropology no province will provide such varied data for investigation as Assam.

The valleys and river banks have been the home of Aryan settlers from ages past. The original Aryan stock has been strengthened from time to time by immigrants from the plains of Northern India. The neighbouring hill-tribes have been brought within the influence of Hindu civilization, accompanied by their preference for the softer valleys to their sturdy mountain passes. The gradual enervation of the Aryan settlers has been followed by the establishment of the supremacy of the non-Aryans, who asserted their might from within the province or by entering it from outside. The non-Aryan conquerors gradually came under the influence of the culture and civilization of the conquered races, necessitating the evolution of a religion and a code of customs which would accommodate the vigorous demands of the animistic entrants. Assam thus presents an instructive spectacle of the compromise between Aryan orthodoxy and the so-called heterodoxy of the tribesmen. Aryan and non-Aryan are the

¹ Mr. C. S. Mullan—*Assam Census Report*, 1931, p. 4.

twin pulses of that whole grain of the civilization—which we may name 'the civilization of Assam'.¹

To Indologists working in a wider field Assam is a new mine for exploration. Apart from the fusion of the Aryan and non-Aryan elements, and their co-extensive, parallel or separate developments traceable in the social, religious and political institutions of the people, the ruins and remnants of its ancient architecture and iconography will help us to re-interpret those of other parts of India. The recorded materials of Assam will throw light on the history of ancient and medieval India. There sprang up here a new school of Smritis or laws arising from the peculiar conditions or usages of the province. Its astronomy and astrology evolved new principles which may supplement the knowledge we have of those subjects. The Ahoms preserved and maintained a vast treasure of religious literature. Their earliest religious treatises are impregnated with Buddhistic leanings. This Ahom Buddhism thus re-entered India through Northern Burma where their first germs were spread. It is interesting to study how far this imported Buddhism resembles the Buddhism of the original soil. The study of the Assamese sources and materials will enable us to write a new chapter in History—the contribution of Kamarupa towards the civilization of India.

A land of such fertility and wealth of natural resources could not but excite the cupidity of ambitious conquerors. The pages of its history record the ascendancy of one dynasty and its expulsion by another who had at their command fresh energy and valour. Ruins of ancient capitals and forts meet our eyes at rapid intervals, and the uninitiated spectator is bewildered at the amazing variety of their structure and contents. There are ruins without names while others are duly mentioned in recorded history.

The spade of domestic labourers, of the enterprising planters, and of the trained but casual excavators, have brought out many an inscribed copperplate, stone-slab and

¹ Mr. K. P. Jayaswal said in his speech as President of the Seventh All-India Oriental Conference, held at Baroda in December 1933,—'Iranian and Hindu are the twin pulses of that whole grain which is known as Aryan civilization'.

boulder from under the earth, or disclosed them to public view. They have enabled us to weave out a connected history of many dark periods and have thrown new lights on subjects already within the purview of our knowledge. There are, besides, inscribed pieces which have not yet dipped below the surface of the earth. The utilization of the already discovered inscriptions, and the institution of organized efforts to redeem others from their destined burial are inviting the attention of all investigators. What Henry Thomas Colebrooke said more than a hundred years ago deserves repetition here :

In the scarcity of authentic materials, for the modern history of the Hindu race, importance is justly attached to all genuine monuments, and specially inscriptions on stone and metal, which are occasionally discovered through various accidents. If these be carefully preserved and diligently examined, and the facts ascertained from them judiciously employed towards elucidating the scattered information, which can yet be collected from the remains of Indian literature, a satisfactory progress may be finally made in investigating the history of the Hindus.

Assam is a most inexhaustible mine of recorded materials. In addition to the inscriptions, we have in the country a large mass of documents and records as an off-shoot of the historical instincts of the Assamese people. The Ahom conquerors and settlers and their Assamese compatriots maintained a rigorous system of reducing everything to writing. Every event that happened within the land, and even outside it, was duly recorded, and was ultimately incorporated in the voluminous chronicles of the government which were known as *Buranjis*. They have conserved the language, customs, institutes, official and judicial procedures, social and religious usages, and the intricate details of the state machinery. One would be justified in saying,—‘ Give me the *Buranjis* of Assam, and I will say what the people are ’. The *Buranjis* are our strengthening tie to bind us with the past, and maintain the solidarity of the Assamese people, and protect us from any threatened erosion of our nationalism.

Long before the Library Movement was started in any part of the world the Assamese adopted the system of having a considerable quantity of useful literature in every family. A cluster of manuscripts, whose number increased with the

social position, religious or intellectual heights of the possessor concerned, formed the usual heirloom and heritage transferred by a paterfamilias to his successor. Every Assamese family of some distinction or antiquity had in its possession a small library of manuscripts. Even to-day, after centuries of political revolutions, fires, earthquakes and floods, almost every Assamese family has retained its ancient archive of manuscripts. The manuscripts did not lie mute with their sibylline leaves. The illiteracy of the possessor or of the householder was not an impediment to his knowledge of their contents. The family-priest, or the village pandit, or a literate neighbour or relative, was always at hand, and the manuscripts were frequently read and their contents explained to the audience of household members and their friends. Thus knowledge was driven into the minds of the audience, if not through their eyes, at least through their ears, both of which are equally effective mediums of transmission. Thus in Assam and among the Assamese we come across the peculiar phenomenon of illiterate literacy.

But the facilities of the printing press and the gradual curtailment of religious observances have led to the breaking up of the family store of manuscripts. In a few more decades old manuscripts in possession of Assamese families will be rare. Every family was anciently a repository of manuscripts and we have to collect them in a central place applying to this work all the technique and methodology which have been developed on the subject of scientific preservation of manuscripts. Like British heirlooms drifting into the hands of American plutocrats we also receive occasional reports of Assamese manuscripts leaving the frontiers of the province through the active mediation of enterprising visitors and sojourners from neighbouring lands. In this connection we may repeat the words of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Ganganath Jha :

India is subject to such ravages of fire and water that each year we are losing in the shape of manuscripts, burnt or washed or crumbled away, an amount of treasure, which could not be replaced in the future even at the expenditure of millions of rupees; and the callousness which the public displays towards this would be appalling anywhere else except in this unfortunate country.

It is gratifying to note that Mr. (afterwards Sir) Charles James Lyall, while officiating as Chief Commissioner of Assam, recorded in a Note, dated July 18, 1894, pointing out that

The time had come for a sustained and systematic endeavour to arrest the process of destruction of such historical manuscripts as still survived in the province; that the *Buranjis* in the Assam Valley districts, and similar materials for history in other parts of the province, might either be acquired or accurate copies made of them; and that arrangements might be made for the translation of the Ahom *puthis*, many of which were believed to be of historical value. Mr. Lyall noted that the enquiry might profitably be extended to the libraries of the *Satras* or religious establishments of the great Gosains of Upper Assam; but he was of opinion that the first and most important work to be done was to catalogue and rescue from oblivion the historical records of Assam.¹

Assam with its wealth of materials is of unique importance to historical investigators. This is a virgin soil and few workers have been in the field uptil now. This possibility of extensive work was admitted by the Calcutta University Commission who wrote in their Report :

There has been much talk of the need for establishing a university in Assam; and, although the proposal has not yet reached the stage of being seriously considered by Government, it was strongly advocated by several of the witnesses whom we interviewed during our visit to the province, and as strongly deprecated by others. The assumption which seems to be in the minds both of those who advocate and those who oppose, the step appears to be that a University of Assam must necessarily be of the affiliating type, and must bring together under a single academic control the various colleges of the province. At the same time, the argument most often adduced in favour of the change was that Assam is a distinct province, with languages peculiar to itself, and with a distinctive set of economic, social and ethnological problems; and, although this consideration was not very clearly put before us by most of the witnesses, it seemed to be implied that a university was necessary in order that these problems might be scientifically investigated, and in order that the curricula pursued by the students might be in some degree adopted to the special needs of the country.²

¹ Mr. (afterwards Sir) E. A. Gait,—*Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*, 1897, p. 1.

² *The Report of the Calcutta University Commission*, 1917-19, Vol. IV, Part II, Chapter XXXV, Section 56.

Historical research, besides, being an agency for stimulating intellectual curiosity serves useful purpose in administrative matters. The knowledge of the customs and usages of a particular set of people is an essential preliminary to their good government. The importance of anthropology to administration was discussed at length by Dr. J. H. Hutton in a paper read as President of the Anthropological Section at the Fourteenth Session of the Indian Science Congress. Lord Crewe, a former Secretary of State for India, beautifully sums up the importance of historical research to administration when he writes :

The advancing steps of Indian government, aided as time goes on by the guiding hand, rather than by the all-sustaining arm of Britain, are a matter of concern to millions of Britons who will never see India. It is our duty, therefore, to admit into the recesses of an obscure and difficult enquiry all the light which can be thrown upon them by comparative study of past annals.¹

Lord Ripon in his after-dinner speech in the Centenary Celebrations of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, held on January 15, 1884, expressed similar views emphasizing the importance of historical knowledge for purposes of administration :

To me as a public man, it is peculiarly interesting to see that the founders and the first members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, most of them administrators and judges or men with official duties, approached the problem of Government from one of its most important sides and sought to obtain a real and substantial comprehension of the feelings and genius of the people among whom their lot was to be cast.

3. PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH.—Research activities in Assam fall distinctly into two divisions,—museum and literary work. In the museum section attempts will be made to collect in one place, and make arrangement for scientifically exhibiting old relics, remains and specimens throwing light on the history, customs, arts, geology, mineralogy, fauna and flora, etc. of Assam. The museum section will thus collect and preserve :

- (1) Inscriptions on brass, copper, stone and other substances.
- (2) Ancient monuments, Muhammadan or Hindu, which can be removed from their original sites.

¹ Foreword to Prof. Radhakumud Mookerji's *Local Government in Ancient India*.

- (3) Ancient coins and tokens of currency.
- (4) Instruments of war peculiar to Assam.
- (5) Articles of dress and ornaments used by the various tribes and races of Assam.
- (6) Instruments of music.
- (7) The vessels used in religious ceremonies.
- (8) Implements of native art and manufacture, etc.
- (9) Animals peculiar to Assam, dried or preserved.
- (10) Skeletons of particular bones of animals peculiar to Assam.
- (11) Birds peculiar to Assam, stuffed or preserved.
- (12) Dried plants, fruits, etc.
- (13) Minerals or vegetable productions peculiar to Assamese pharmacy.
- (14) Ores of metals.
- (15) Native alloys of metals.
- (16) Minerals of every description.
- (17) Specimens of ancient costumes.
- (18) Articles and belongings associated with historical persons.
- (19) Specimens of ancient painting, penmanship, etc.
- (20) Autograph writings of celebrated personages.
- (21) Rare printed books, and newspaper cuttings of historical significance.

The literary section will be engaged in the collection, classification and reconstruction of written materials. It will also encourage the compilation of treatises and monographs on subjects on which more light is needed. The work of the literary section can be stated as follows :

- (1) Compilation of a Bibliography of Assam History.
- (2) Collection of ancient *puthis* and manuscripts.
- (3) Collection of manuscript Assam Buranjis or chronicles.
- (4) Examination of the East India Company's records.
- (5) Examination of the records deposited in Government archives in Assam, and the adjoining Bengal Districts.
- (6) Collection of ballads, folk-songs and folk-tales, traditions, etc.
- (7) Compilation of a descriptive list of the archaeological remains of Assam, preferably with photographs.
- (8) Compilation of treatises on other historical relics and curios.
- (9) Anthropology of the various tribes and races living in Assam.
- (10) Preparation of the texts of ancient copperplates and rock inscriptions.
- (11) History of towns and other historical places ; topography and toponomy.

- (12) Accounts of foreign travellers.
- (13) Persian accounts.
- (14) References to Assam in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tibetan and Chinese literatures.
- (15) Compilation of treatises on paleolithic implements, mineralogy, fauna and flora of Assam.
- (16) Treatises on cannon and warlike implements, costumes, etc.
- (17) Records relating to the history of the tea industry in Assam.
- (18) Records of the various Christian Missions in Assam.

For the convenience of intending workers we note below a few subjects which can be taken up for investigation :

- (1) Geographic and climatic condition of Assam.
- (2) The fauna and flora of Assam : botanical aspects of the country ; elephant-catching in Assam.
- (3) The mineralogical and geological features of the country.
- (4) The Assamese : their racial characteristics, habitat and affinities.
- (5) Aryan migration into Assam : ancient Kamarupa.
- (6) Assam in the epics, classics, Puranas, Tantras, etc.
- (7) Buddhist influence in Assam.
- (8) Assam in the pre-Ahom period.
- (9) The Ahoms in Assam : short history of their reign ; wars with foreigners.
- (10) The fusion of Shan and Assamese culture.
- (11) The Ahom system of government : state of the country during Ahom rule.
- (12) The Bara-Bhuyans in Assam.
- (13) The Koch, Chutia, Jaintia, Kachari kings of Assam : Manipur.
- (14) The Muhammadans in Assam : their laws, customs, etc.
- (15) Foreigners' accounts of Assam.
- (16) The archaeological remains in Assam.
- (17) History of the Assamese language and literature.
- (18) Assamese art, music, painting, sculpture, pottery, weaving, wickerwork, etc.
- (19) Extinct and existing Assamese industries.
- (20) The religious institutions of the Assamese people : *Satras* ; festivals, etc.
- (21) Assamese social customs, pastimes, recreations, marriage, *Bihus*, etc.
- (22) Assamese village-life : *Namghar*, *Bhawana*, *Khel*, *Panchayat*, etc.
- (23) Assamese agriculture, crops, cattle, etc.
- (24) Great men and women of Assam.
- (25) Specimens of Assamese folklore.

- (26) The economic condition of the Assamese people.
- (27) The border-tribes of Assam.
- (28) Christian Missionary work in Assam.
- (29) Tea industry in Assam.
- (30) History of education in Assam.

4. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES UNDER GOVERNMENT.

—The province of Assam had been a veritable *terra incognita* during the days of the East India Company. It was the only province which systematically resisted the imperialistic designs of the Mogul Emperors. Its wealth and resources were known all over India; but an intimate knowledge of the province or its resources was a matter of very difficult acquisition. The Assam kings rigidly protected their country from the penetrating glance of foreigners. Tavernier, Bernier, Manucci, Ralph Fitch, Stephen Cacella, T. Cabral, Bartholomew Plaisted, Sebastino Manrique wrote disjointed accounts of Assam, and they were characterized by the credulity and uncritical absorption of all travellers' tales. The first serious description of Assam and its inhabitants was embodied in the *Loss of the Ter Schelling*, written by a camp-follower of Mir Jumla, and published by Glanius in 1682.

One Jean Baptiste Chevalier, who played an important part in the Anglo-French relations of the latter half of the eighteenth century, paid in 1757¹ an unwelcome visit to the Ahom King Rajeswar Singha. His object was to consolidate the Assam trade of the French East India Company from their headquarters at Goalpara. He collected some information relative to the geography of Assam but his attempts were frustrated by the timely intervention of the agents of the Ahom King. Major James Rennell, the geographer, traversed in 1765 the area where 'the Bengal districts end, and Assam began', but there he writes with regret,—'But I was not permitted to go any higher'.²

The English East India Company obtained the desired opportunity of acquiring information about Assam when a British detachment had to be sent in 1792 at the express invitation of the Ahom King Gaurinath Singha. Lord

¹ S. C. Hill in *Three Frenchmen of Bengal* and J. P. Wade ascribe Chevalier's visit to 1757; Major Rennell to 1762.

² Rennell's *Memoir of a Map of Hindustan*, 3rd edition, 1793, p. 298.

Cornwallis, Governor-General of India, wrote to Captain Thomas Welsh, the commander of the expedition :

However extraordinary it may appear to people in Europe, we are under the necessity of admitting that owing to the unremitting jealousy which the chiefs of this country have hitherto shown to the English, we know little more of the interior parts of Nepal and Assam than of the interior parts of China, and I therefore think that no pains should be spared to avail ourselves of so favourable an opportunity to obtain good surveys and to acquire every information that may be possible both of the population, and of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, as well as the trade and manufactures and natural productions of countries with which it must ever be our interest to maintain the most friendly communication.¹

As a result of Lord Cornwallis's injunction Captain Welsh despatched lengthy accounts about the government, customs and products of Assam; while Ensign Wood, the surveyor of the expedition, prepared maps of the country, and Dr. J. P. Wade wrote historical and geographical accounts of Assam. Dr. Wade admitted that 'strangers of every description were scrupulously denied admission into Assam'. Captain Welsh's expedition had to retire from Assam in July 1794; but the first-hand information gained about Assam discovered the province to the vigilant interest of the East India Company. The commercial relations between Assam and the East India Company were placed on a sound and secure footing, and there took place frequent interchange of embassies between the two territories. The records of the East India Company between 1792 and 1826 supply ample evidence of their earnest attempt to collect information about Assam. In 1809 the indefatigable Francis Buchanan-Hamilton collected information about the government and commerce of Assam, as part of his survey of the territories of the East India Company on which he was employed by the Company, but even this he had to do from his camp at Rungpoor in Bengal.

Since the establishment of British supremacy in Assam in 1826 the compilation of treatises and reports on the various

¹ *Captain Welsh's Expedition to Assam* by Lt.-Col. J. Johnstone, 1912, p. 11.

aspects of Assam was vigorously conducted under Government auspices. Most of them are embodied in official despatches, unknown at present except to the archivistic explorer, while some have seen the light of day through the pages of the contemporary oriental journals and the periodically published selections from Government records. David Scott's despatches to the Company's headquarters at Calcutta contained the first official impressions of the British about Assam and the neighbouring hill tracts. In 1832 Captain Jenkins was deputed to Assam by Lord William Bentinck to report on its resources and products. During the administration of Upper Assam by Purandar Singha, 1833-38, Colonel Adam White, Political Agent, resident at Biswanath, prepared a digest of information on the resources and history of Assam. The chief Assamese informant of Jenkins and White was Maniram Dewan. Jenkins's reports are mainly buried in the volumes of official records, and only a few were published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. In 1838 Captain Jenkins visited Upper Assam in order to obtain first-hand information about Purandar Singha's administration. His impressions have been recorded in his *Diary of a Tour in Upper Assam*.¹

The labours of Colonel Jenkins were supplemented by those of Hannay, Peal, Foster, Robinson, Pemberton, Dalton, etc. Through their united efforts Assam became widely known throughout India and elsewhere.

From 1826 Assam was a Division of Bengal and its Commissioner was also designated as Agent to the Governor-General of India on the North-East Frontier. The records of the period are buried in the archives of the Governments of Bengal and Assam.

Since the constitution of Assam into an independent province in 1874 under a Chief Commissioner, efforts in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge about the province took a more systematic turn. The administrative reports of the various departments, the periodic Census Reports, monographs on special subjects came out in quick succession. But it must be admitted that all this work was necessary

¹ The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies has fortunately obtained possession of the original volume of Colonel White's Manuscript Notes and Colonel Jenkins's Diary.

from the administrative point of view, and though it disclosed judgment and penetration historical scholarship was not the mainspring of action.

5. ETHNOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED, 1894.—The first attempt to conduct investigations into the history of Assam under direct Government auspices was made in 1894. The measure was initiated in July 1894 by Sir William Ward, Chief Commissioner of Assam, at the instance of Mr. (now Sir) Edward Gait who suggested 'that in Assam enquiries might be made into the ancient history of the province'. Mr. (afterwards Sir) Charles James Lyall while officiating as Chief Commissioner gave practical shape to the measure proposed by Sir William Ward and Mr. Gait. The Department of Ethnography was established to give effect to the scheme and a grant was made from the provincial revenues from the year 1894-95. In September 1894 Mr. Gait summarized the action proposed to be taken in conducting historical research in Assam, as follows :

Coins—

- (1) Old Ahom coins to be read, and a search to be made for the coins of kings not yet collected. A complete catalogue to be made of later Ahom coins, and any new ones thus brought to light to be acquired.
- (2) A thorough search to be made for coins of the Koch kings and earlier dynasties, if any such can be found.
- (3) A collection and description of Manipuri coins to be undertaken under the auspices of the Political Agent, Manipur.

Inscriptions—

- (4) A search to be made for copperplate grants by Jaintia and other Sylhet rulers.
- (5) Ahom land-grant plates to be collated.
- (6) Ahom temple inscriptions to be collated.
- (7) Inscriptions on rocks at Tezpur and at Maibang and elsewhere to be photographed, and rubbings of the same to be taken and sent to some competent scholars for decipherment.

Historical documents—

- (8) The Manipur State records to be copied and translated.
- (9) The Ahom historical *puthis* to be copied and translated.
- (10) A thorough search to be made for other historical documents.

Quasi-historical writings—

- (11) Vamsavali of Laksminarayana to be copied and translated.
- (12) Vamsavali of Prasiddhanarayana to be copied and translated.
- (13) Arimatta's *pulhi* to be copied and translated.
- (14) A copy of the *Kumara-haran* to be purchased, if available.
- (15) A search to be made for other similar documents, and a catalogue of those found to be made in the same form as that adopted in Bengal by the Asiatic Society.

Religious works—

- (16) Copies to be purchased of all old Assamese religious works which have been printed.
- (17) A search to be made in the libraries of the *Satras*, with a view to ascertaining if they contain any works of a historical nature.

Traditions—

- (18) Traditions to be recorded whenever heard of.¹

Mr. Gait left the province in 1897 after having published his Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam. The Report contained a digest of the original sources, *viz.*, inscriptions on copperplates, stones, cannon, etc. coins, historical and quasi-historical manuscripts and other sources of information. A bibliography of all papers and books relating to Assam including even unpublished sources was appended to the Report. This Report was a document of great importance, as it served to awaken wide-spread interest in historical investigations in Assam. The materials collected by Sir Edward Gait were utilized by him in his *History of Assam* which was first published in 1906.

Sir Edward Gait was succeeded by Lt.-Col. P. R. T. Gurdon in the Provincial Directorship in the Ethnography Department. The study of anthropology, for which Assam proved to be a fruitful field, was gradually gaining greater importance all over the world. In 1904 Mr. (afterwards Sir) Bampfylde Fuller inaugurated a scheme for the compilation of a series of monographs on the hill-tribes of Assam, and several

¹ E. A. Gait, *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*, pp. 1-2.

were published between 1904 and 1920, when Colonel Gurdon retired from Assam being succeeded by Dr. J. H. Hutton. It was during Colonel Gurdon's regime that the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami conducted in 1912-13 a systematic search for Assamese manuscripts. Thus during this period there was a blending of historical and literary activities with anthropological investigations.

The pressing demands of anthropological studies in consequence of the rapid disintegration of the customs of the primitive tribes diverted for the time being the importance of pure historical research. The demands of both anthropology and history became too unwieldy for management under one official head, and this was one of the reasons which necessitated the establishment of a separate department for the advancement of historical and antiquarian studies in the province. On Dr. Hutton's translation to Delhi as Census Commissioner for India, Mr. J. P. Mills was appointed in 1930 Honorary Provincial Director of Ethnography.

In addition to the activities of the Ethnography Department the Government of Assam have, during the last few decades, published a series of books on the languages and industries of the province. In spite of the limited resources of our province, more so in view of its constant exposure to floods and earthquakes, the Government have done all they can to promote historical investigations. A glance at the Catalogue of Assam Government Publications will convince readers that our Government have not shirked their obligation to promote and stimulate a correct appreciation of the various languages, customs, industries of the diverse races placed under their charge and control.

We all acknowledge with gratitude that in the field of Indology European scholars have been the pioneers, though they have had many worthy successors amongst Indians.—*Sir Asutosh Mookherjee's Address at the Annual Meeting of the Behar and Orissa Research Society, held at Government House, Patna, on March 15, 1923.*

PART II.

Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies.

ITS ORIGIN, OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES.

1. **ORIGIN.**—To realize the importance of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies and the reasons which led to its establishment one has to remember the fact that Assam has no University of its own. The educational destiny of our province is roped in with the University of Calcutta which is controlled by the Government of Bengal. Hence research activities in Assam have to be conducted by individual workers in the face of enormous difficulties, while in a University they receive all the necessary facilities from the permanent and stable organizations maintained for the purpose. Investigations into the past history of India or of a particular province form part of the normal activities of a University. Higher academic degrees, promotions and even continuance in an academic position cannot be expected without some intrinsic achievement in the field of original research. Fame and preferential treatment accompanied by material gain supply the necessary incentive for original work in all provinces blessed with Universities. In every centre of learning there is an atmosphere of scholarship, and frequent consultations between co-workers can be held, thus avoiding unnecessary loss of time in going through the spade-work. Treatises compiled by scholars are published at the expense of the Universities in the usual course of business. Materials are collected under University auspices for which the individual worker may even expect some remuneration.

Plutarch, the prince of biographers, whose observations are 'even for modern times, an object of indestructible interest', had, so early as the first century A.D., realized the advantages of a big city for the purpose of historical investigation. Thus he writes in the life of Demosthenes:

The first requisite to happiness is, that a man be born in a famous city. . . . As he (the writer of history) has

materials to collect from a variety of books dispersed in different libraries, his first care should be to take up his residence in some populous town which has an ambition for literature. There he will meet with many curious and valuable books; and the particulars that are wanting in writers, he may, upon inquiry, be supplied with by those who have laid them up in the faithful repository of memory. This will prevent his work from being defective in any material point.¹

But here in Assam the research worker is hampered by endless disadvantages. He works single-handed. Half his life is spent in doing the spade-work. The loan of books or records from distant libraries involves interminable correspondence. He collects his materials at his own expense; prepares transcripts and digests at his own expense too. The reading public being generally unacquainted with the importance of serious treatises are indifferent to his toilsome compilations. Besides, his activities, however indefatigable they may be, do not form part of any institutional or departmental programme. Not infrequently he is subjected to misgivings for transcending the needs of his bread-earning avocation. He ruins himself financially, and as the major part of his labours is spent in providing a library and a workshop at his own home, or poring over work which can be performed by mechanical assistants, he is in a position to contribute but little to the advancement of learning. In advanced countries the equipment of a historical investigator is regarded as a national asset; and the nation provides him facility and time to interpret and reconstruct its past. The public here being better regaled with the romancings, inventions and exaggerations of uncritical history-writers are not trained to appreciate the serious and scientific reconstructions of academic workers.

The present writer and his comrades engaged in the wearisome and spendthrift business of original research have constantly realized the extreme difficulty of their situation. The University is not to come soon, and at times pessimism and even suspicion about their own wisdom constantly harass their minds. But the moral obligation that we few who have some pretence of education and enlightenment have to

¹ Translation published by Messrs. Blackie & Son, Vol. III, pp. 170-1.

contribute our mite to the cultural regeneration of our land, has served as the silver lining behind the cloud, and saved us at times when less vigorous souls would have succumbed to the depressing gloom of the surrounding atmosphere.

Fortunately for us and for the future of Assam there was Mr. John Richard Cunningham at the helm of the educational affairs of the province. The persistent worship of culture which he conducted between intervals of office files enabled him to realize our difficulties, and in January 1928 he submitted formal proposals to the Government of Assam for the establishment of a department for the prosecution of historical and antiquarian studies, to be maintained out of grants from provincial revenues. This timely measure of Mr. Cunningham, Director of Public Instruction, Assam, 1912-31, is brimful of limitless possibilities, and his move in this matter will be one of the many bloodless trophies which Britishers have annexed in the remote corners of their far-flung Empire.

In June 1928 Mr. Cunningham's proposal was accepted by Government. His Excellency Sir Laurie Hammond gave his sanction to the establishment of the Department, and a Circular was issued to all Heads of Departments and the leading Government officers of the province explaining the objects of the new Department, with a request that all possible assistance should be rendered to the officers appointed to direct its activities.

During the administration of the province by His Excellency Sir Laurie Hammond the Department enjoyed the steady patronage of the Government. From the grants made to the Department a large part of the scheme inaugurated by Mr. H. C. Barnes and the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami was brought to completion. *Kamaratna-tantra* by the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami, *Ahom Buranji* by Rai Sahib Golapchandra Barua, *Ghora-nidan* by Srijut Tarinicharan Bhattacharjee, each provided with an English translation, and Mr. Goswami's *Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts* were published; Prof. S. K. Bhuyan's *Tungkhungia Buranji* with English translation was sent to the press; and Prof. U. K. Goswami's translation of *Swarganarayan Janmacharit* was accepted for publication.

Sir Laurie Hammond further evinced his anxiety for the preservation of the old records of the province by constructing a commodious and up-to-date Record Room at Shillong. He also initiated measures for the compilation of a catalogue of the Agency Records of the Assam Government, 1823-74, and for this purpose the present writer was deputed for a period of two months, April and May 1930, to make a preliminary survey, and his report embodying schemes for the compilation of the catalogue and preservation of records has been printed as an official memorandum. The work of the catalogue had to be postponed for the present on account of the depleted finances of the province, aggravated by a succession of earthquakes and floods. His Excellency Sir Laurie Hammond had materially encouraged the cause of historical research in the province by writing a Foreword to our first Bulletin, which His Excellency concluded by saying :

The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies hopes to rescue as much as possible before the curtain of time drops and the movements of the actors are lost for good and all. It deserves the support of all sections of society whether in the shape of funds or in active assistance in research.

2. OBJECTS.—As we said before the object of the Department is to promote historical research in Assam so that a more detailed and intimate knowledge of the past history of the province in all spheres of life may be diffused. It is primarily concerned with the work contemplated in the literary section of the programme of research, formulated in the first part of this Bulletin. The Department fully recognizes the fact that for the furtherance of historical research in the province we have to make full use of the available written records, in the shape of source materials, contemporary treatises, official documents and chronicles, etc., in order that sufficient data may be provided for work on constructive lines. A part of the spade-work has been already done by our ancestors whose compilations and dissertations, however crude they may appear to present-day scholars, afford an invaluable mine for exploration. We also realize that the present histories of Assam are mere dry-bones though presented in a systematic form. The customs, feelings and aspirations of the people come out better in the

human sketches recorded in our old chronicles and source-books. The narratives, episodes and annals, that fill the pages of Assamese chronicles, will provide the necessary themes for creative and artistic treatment in literature. We remember fully that the compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle by King Alfred was an achievement as glorious as his expulsion of the Danes; and also that the historical plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare would not have been possible but for the labours of the chroniclers Holinshed and Hall. By taking up the work of publishing the ancient chronicles of Assam, compiled by eminent statesmen, nobles and scholars, we hope to disseminate knowledge of the past in the language of the past. The existence of a large mass of original source-books will check the hasty conclusions of theorists viewing and interpreting the past 'through the deflecting prism of their emotions'; and any inaccuracy, unwarranted observation and even prejudice that might lurk in their presentation of facts will at once be detected and exposed if they do not find any basis in the contemporary documents. Synthetic work is thus rendered possible, accompanied by the necessary safeguard preventing sweeping generalizations being made on insufficient data. These chronicles are specimens of racy Assamese prose, and they preserve intact the structure and vocabulary of the Assamese language, and as such they supply the needed data for philological and phonological investigations.

The compilation, translation and publication of ancient historical classics do not constitute the only object of the Department. We have taken them first because the chronicles are readily available, and they represent the starting point from which we have to march forward on the path of historical research. Reconstruction is a question of delay and equipment, but the chronicles can be published readily and made available to all intending synthesizers.

The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies will search for historical manuscripts, as well as other manuscripts which are also historical in the sense that they represent a definite phase of our ancient civilization and culture. If in the course of a search for the antiquities of the province the Department comes to know about relics *in situ* or movable relics other than manuscripts and copperplates, it will make

over the information to the museum section of our province's research organization, and if the Department's help be needed in examining or acquiring them it will most gladly offer its helping hand. The Department will, besides, arrange to compile treatises on subjects on which information is desired by the public, or which will be helpful in stimulating historical research.

In addition to the work contemplated in the preceding paragraphs the Department will be a publishing syndicate. We know well that there were and there are still numerous stores of manuscripts. But in the absence of a well-organized agency for publication, the useful knowledge and information consecrated in their crumbling folios, have been lost to the world. It will not do simply to collect manuscripts; efforts on proper lines must be instituted to bring their contents to the knowledge of the public, in strict conformity with the demands of accuracy and scientific and constructive editing of old classics. There are scholars who have sufficient attainments to write books, but not sufficient money to publish them, and specially historical books have a few favourers. The Department will come to the rescue of individual scholars if their compilations deserve publication out of the public funds.

The work of the Department is not going to end after a few decades or centuries. The progress of human knowledge will elicit enlightenment on all aspects of the past, and we can well imagine that branch offices will be established at different places in Assam ministered by the experience of the establishment at the Department's headquarters.

We admit the futility of reducing our programme to a cut-and-dried one. We admire the encyclopedic vision of Sir William Jones when in January 1784 he formulated the objects of the proposed Asiatic Society of Bengal:

The bounds of the investigation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal will be the geographical limits of Asia; and within these limits its enquiries will be extended to whatever is performed by man or produced by nature.

What Edward Young uttered on a similar purpose in his *Night Thoughts* may be reproduced here:

Had our age been coeval with the sun
The patriarch-pupil would be learning still.

We formulated a working plan of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies where its functions were stated as follows, and we reproduce it from Bulletin I, p. 6 :

- (1) Search for, recovery and acquisition of ancient historical classics.
- (2) Search for, recovery and acquisition of modern historical works compiled by living or dead authors.
- (3) Compilation of historical works by private scholars under arrangement with the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies.
- (4) Compilation of historical works departmentally by the staff of the D.H.A.S.
- (5) Receiving of information on historical subjects from officers and private gentlemen, and the collation of such information received from one or more sources in a presentable form.
- (6) Editing and publishing of historical works mentioned above as far as funds permit.
- (7) Sale of the publications of the Department.
- (8) Direction of research work undertaken by individual investigators if the assistance of the Department be desired.
- (9) Appointment of Corresponding Members consisting of gentlemen and ladies interested in historical research.
- (10) Any other work which should legitimately form part of a historical and antiquarian organization in order to advance the objects mentioned above.

Professor Allen Johnson has classified historical sources into two main divisions, records and remains :

Records are documents designed to transmit information, in order either to perpetuate traditions and the memory of events, or to serve immediate practical purposes ; while remains are mere inanimate vestiges of human life. Myths, folk-tales, ballads, and songs may be records, as well as anecdotes, genealogies, memoirs, biographies, printings and sculptuary, annals, chronicles, and histories, though their value for historical purpose will vary greatly. Among records, too, must be included all those public and quasi-public documents which have a utilitarian purpose, such as proclamations, laws, treaties, ordinances, court records, legislative records, diplomatic papers, tax lists, maps and charts, charters, corporation records, canon laws, and ecclesiastical records of all sorts. And, finally, such private records as diaries, letters, commercial papers, wills, conveyances, and inventories, have an important place among historical sources. Remains, on the other hand, may include the tangible evidence of the ways of human

society, such as sepulchres, temples, arms and armor, utensils, tools, clothing, adornments, weights and measures, coins, vehicles, houses, roads, bridges, and literature in general, as well as those intangible mental habits represented by language and its idioms, by names, and by proverbs, and those social institutions which are summed up in the terms worship, magic, marriage, and labor.¹

It will be seen that the object of the D.H.A.S., as laid down in the previous paragraphs, is to investigate into and work upon the sources falling under Professor Johnson's definition and enumeration of records as far as conditions in Assam permit; while those included under remains form legitimate part of museum activities.

3. VOLUME OF WORK.—Since the publication of our first Bulletin in February 1932 the Department's activities have increased to a considerable extent. We have brought out altogether seven publications, and in each case the work of editing and seeing the book through the press, and the necessary correspondence with the printing firms concerned have put a severe strain on the Directorate and the staff. The sale of books has to be pushed forward with vigilance and circumspection so that it may yield a fair revenue to the Government. We have collected a large number of fresh manuscripts from different centres, and the more valuable ones in our collection have been transcribed or typewritten by the office staff. Our sale proceeds are regularly deposited at the Gauhati Treasury, and strict accounts are kept of our disbursements necessitating frequent correspondence with the controlling authorities at the provincial headquarters. We have to correspond with gentlemen supplying information on ancient records, seeking permission for inserting excerpts from our publications, or soliciting the Department's assistance and direction in conducting their independent research work. We have, besides, to correspond with manuscript owners. We have also to correspond with oriental scholars of international repute who desire information on our activities. The

¹ *The Historian and Historical Evidence*, by Allen Johnson, Professor of American History, Yale University, pp. 4-5, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926. Prof. Johnson's distinction between remains and records, substantially corresponds to our classification of the activities of the museum section and literary section respectively, set forth in Part I, *ante*.

letters received during January 7, 1932 to February 22, 1934, numbered 385; and our issues, both letters and packets, during July 15, 1929 to February 22, 1934, came up to 1,805.

4. OFFICE STAFF.—The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies was established on June 25, 1928. An allotment was made in the Budget for 1929-30 and the Department began to function from July 15, 1929. A regular office was established at Gauhati under the control and supervision of the Honorary Assistant Director for the Brahmaputra Valley Division, and three temporary Assistants were appointed during the first year. We have at present two Assistants, Srijut Basudev Misra, B.A., appointed on August 13, 1929, and Srijut Madhabchandra Barooah, on April 16, 1931, and they have been given a regular grade on a rising scale of pay with effect from April 1, 1932.

The work done by the Department's Assistants falls distinctly into two divisions, *viz.*, literary and clerical. Their *literary* work comprises transcription of manuscripts, comparison of transcripts and proofs with originals; revision and correction of proofs; collation of texts from two or more manuscripts; in brief, they render all the mechanical assistance necessary for editing texts. They also scrutinize, assort, label and number manuscripts and transcripts, and maintain a regular descriptive list with the names of owners and the conditions of the loan or gift. The *clerical* portion of their labours includes the receiving of letters, typewriting and despatching of the correspondence of the Department; despatching of proofs; sale of books locally; executing orders for books from mofussil customers and despatching the same by V.P.P.; preparation of bills and challans; keeping accounts of the money received from the Government and the amount realized from the sale of books. As such the work of the staff is unremitting and incessant, and their hands are scarcely free.

5. THE DIRECTORATE.—The *Assam Gazette* of June 13, 1928, notified the appointment of the officers of the Department. Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck, C.I.E., I.C.S., M.A. (Oxon), F.R.G.S., Commissioner of the Assam Valley Division, was appointed Honorary Provincial Director. Two Honorary Assistant Directors were appointed for the two valleys of the province,

Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S., M.A. (Oxon), then Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, for the Surma Valley Division, and Srijut Suryyakumar Bhuyan, M.A., B.L., Professor, Cotton College, Gauhati, for the Brahmaputra Valley Division. During Mr. Bentinck's leave for eight weeks from August 12, 1931, Prof. S. K. Bhuyan was appointed to officiate as Honorary Provincial Director. On Mr. Bentinck's retirement from office on December 6, 1933, Prof. S. K. Bhuyan has been appointed Honorary Provincial Director of the Department. Maulavi Abul Fazl Syed Ahmad, M.A. (Cal. and Dac.), Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Cotton College, Gauhati, has been appointed to succeed Prof. Bhuyan in the office of the Honorary Assistant Director for the Brahmaputra Valley Division.

Sir Wolsely Haig's remarks deserve to be quoted in this connection,—‘The Department is organized on the most economical principles. The work of those who conduct its activities is a labour of love’.¹ The workers of the Department have accepted and followed the ideal *that the office which they hold is to be looked upon not as an ornament to themselves, but as an instrument of service to the cause of learning and scholarship.*

6. MR. BENTINCK'S RETIREMENT.—Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck, the first Honorary Provincial Director of the Department, retired on December 6, 1933. Though engrossed in highly responsible administrative duties as Commissioner of the Assam Valley Division he found time to guide, supervise and vigilantly guard the interest of our infant Department. All schemes of expansion received his prompt and sympathetic support. Besides discharging the official responsibilities he revised several English manuscripts taken up for publication.

During his five years' association with the Department he tried to give it a definite shape, so that its scope and object might be of a precise character. In one place he defined its work in a very succinct form by saying,—‘The work of the Department is to collect historical manuscripts ancient and modern, to transcribe them, to edit and collate them and prepare them for the press, correct the proofs, arrange for the

¹ Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London, Vol. VI, Part 4, p. 1085.

sale of the printed books, and carry on the necessary correspondence arising at each stage'. This policy formulated in precise terms by the first official head of the Department has been and will be our guiding principle of action. As we said in our first Bulletin, 'Recovery and publication will be the guiding aim of the Department'.

Mr. Bentinck expressed his desire to continue in charge of the Department during the few months of his stay in India after his retirement, and he proposed to take up the work of preparing the much-needed historical map of Assam on which he had planned to work for several years past. But Fate ordained it otherwise, and Mr. Bentinck had to alter his plan for continuance in India. He has promised to shower on us his blessings from the sanctuary of his well-deserved rest. His guidance and watchfulness were our strong bulwark, and their absence has only imposed greater responsibilities on our shoulders. Under his tenderness and care our Department has learnt to stand and walk, and his motherly caressings have infused a vitality into its limbs which will enable it to storm all weather in future, fair or foul.

7. HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT.—

In May 1932 Sir Laurie Hammond laid down his rod of office, being succeeded by His Excellency Sir Michael Keane, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., B.A. The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies is specially fortunate in having in our present Governor a true friend and patron of scholarship. During His Excellency's first official visit to Gauhati His Excellency proposed to pay a visit to the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies on March 26, 1933. But as His Excellency had to go back to Shillong after a few hours' stay at Gauhati, His Excellency's engagements had to be cancelled, except one or two which could be rushed through during the limited time at His Excellency's disposal. Towards the end of June 1933, His Excellency was pleased to grant an interview to the Honorary Assistant Director for the Brahmaputra Valley Division at Shillong, during which His Excellency examined some of the manuscripts in possession of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. His Excellency showed keen interest and sympathy in the work of the Department.

On November 14, 1933, His Excellency the Governor of Assam visited the office of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. All the manuscripts, transcripts and publications of the Department were laid on table for His Excellency's inspection. A copy of the *Tungkhungia Buranji*, English Translation, newly arrived from the press was presented to His Excellency as a souvenir of his august visit. His Excellency expressed his satisfaction at the rich collection made by the Department. His Excellency was accompanied by the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Kanak Lal Barua, B.L., Minister for Local Self-Government, Lieutenant A. J. Landner-Clarke, Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency, Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck, Commissioner of the Assam Valley Division, Mr. C. S. Mullan, I.C.S., M.A. (Dublin), Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup, and Mr. B. H. Routledge, I.P., Superintendent of Police, Kamrup.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Abdul Hamid, B.L., Educational Minister to the Government of Assam, paid a visit to the Department on February 15, 1933, and examined its collection.

Mr. Kasinath Dikshit, M.A., Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India, visited the office of the Department on March 5, 1933, and purchased a complete set of the Department's publications.

8. PUBLICATIONS.—We published only two chronicles up to February 1932, viz., *Assam Buranji* and *Kamrupar Buranji*. The first book has been prescribed as a text-book in Assamese vernacular at the Intermediate Arts and Science Examinations of the Calcutta University, and *Kamrupar Buranji* for the B.A. Examination of the same University. We have published during the period under review four more books, viz., *Tungkhungia Buranji*, *Deodhai Asam Buranji*, *Asamar Padya-Buranji* and *Tungkhungia Buranji*, English Translation, besides our first Bulletin.

We are glad to note that our publications have been well received. They have been used almost in all historical articles and treatises since published. We have received tangible evidence of a general feeling that no discourse on Assam history can avoid examination of the source-books published by our Department. Srijut Jyotiprasad Agarwala, the producer of the first Assamese historical film, has made ample use of our publications, and also of our direction and guidance,

with regard to the setting of the story of the martyred princess Jaymati Kuanri.

The Assam Baniya Samaj in a sitting held on August 5, 1933, under the presidency of Srijut Rameshchandra Das, M.A., B.L., passed a resolution thanking the authorities of the Department for publishing *Kali-bharat Buranji*¹ by Dutiram Swarnakar Hazarika, a member of their community. The resolution took the shape of an address sent to Prof. Bhuyan, the editor of the said metrical chronicle. Rai Sahib Sonadhar Das Senapati, the Secretary of the Assam Baniya Samaj, has further shown his interest in the Department's work by presenting us other manuscripts written by Dutiram Hazarika and placing at the disposal of the Department information which we had solicited from him.

On account of the financial stringency of the Government our publication work has been stayed for some time. We are utilizing this interval by transcribing and editing some of our historical classics so that they can be sent to the press when finances improve. We expect that some public-spirited donor will come to the rescue of the Department in our present difficulties.

Almost all our publications are in Assamese. But we have tried to make them useful to the English-reading public by inserting prefaces and introductions in English. In our *Deodhai Asam Buranji* and *Tungkhungia Buranji* (Assamese) the English introductions embody a critical synopsis of the chronicles. In *Asamar Padya-Buranji* or a metrical chronicle of Assam, an elaborate synopsis in English has been inserted at the end, in addition to the usual introduction in English.

We are glad to note that Arthur Probsthain, the well-known oriental book-seller of 41, Great Russell Street, London, has arranged to stock our publications for sale. We may be permitted to reproduce here Mr. Probsthain's most encouraging words in this connection; and we cherish them the more as they come from a person who is most intimately acquainted with all phases of achievement in Orientology: 'I have noticed, with considerable interest, within recent years the great advance in scholarship, on sound European lines, in

¹ *Kali-bharat Buranji* forms the first part of our *Asamar Padya-Buranji*, pp. 1-212.

India, and in spite of it your Bulletin came as a great surprise to me, being of exceptionally high standard. 'The bibliographical work is absolutely perfect'.

Through the courtesy of Mr. R. C. Goffin, M.A., I.E.S. (Retired), General Manager, the Oxford University Press took up the publication of our *Tungkhungia Buranji*, English Translation. The book has been prepared to meet the high standard of scholarship attached to all publications associated with the name Humphrey Milford. This book will get the advantage of the well-established net-work of sales organizations connected with the Oxford University Press; and is thus expected to secure greater publicity to our Department and to our province, as well as a good return.

Tungkhungia Buranji, English Translation, has evoked general interest amongst the reading public. It was favourably reviewed in the *Statesman* of December 10, 1933. Even the inimitable *Kim* has made reference to this book soon after its publication, in the *Here and There* column, in successive issues of the *Statesman*.

9. SALE OF PUBLICATIONS.—The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies is not a mere expending Department. It brings revenue to the Government in the shape of the sale proceeds of its publications, whereas no other provincial Government in India enjoy any financial return for the grants made to Universities and other learned bodies. In addition to the promotion of historical studies we are developing the D.H.A.S. as a sound business proposition, so that it may in course of time lighten the burden on our provincial revenues. We have deposited at the Government Treasury a sum of Rs. 946-10 which we have realized by the sale of our publications up to February 22, 1934. We may repeat what we said in our first Bulletin,—'If money be the barometer of sympathy we may be flattered into the belief that there is a demand for historical compilations, which is not surprising when we remember Assam's traditional love of historical learning'. With better organization of sales we expect to yield a more substantial revenue to the Government.

Our first two publications, *Assam Buranji* and *Kamrupar Buranji*, have become text-books in Calcutta University, which will help to raise our sales figures. Advertisements have

been inserted in the leading Assamese periodicals, *Awahan*, *Assamiya* and *Batori*. We have also printed a *Descriptive List of Publications* in English which has been widely circulated. Advertisements have also been inserted at the end of our publications.

Our sale proceeds are regularly deposited at the Gauhati Treasury. With a separate building for our Department admitting free access to the public our sales are bound to have marked improvement.

10. INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN THE D.H.A.S.—

It is extremely gratifying to note that the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in spite of the limited publicity rendered by it, has evoked the interest and sympathy of scholars in the British Isles, France, Germany, Holland, America and even China. Sir Wolseley Haig, the reputed editor of the third volume of *Cambridge History of India*, reviewed our Department's activities in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London*, Vol. VI, Part 4, p. 1085, where he wrote :

In the preface to this admirable publication it is modestly admitted that Assam has not hitherto been classed, in popular estimation, among the most progressive of the provinces of India. Other provinces would, however, do well to follow in its footsteps in pursuing the objects, with which the Government Department which publishes this, its first *Bulletin*, is concerned. The origin and objects of the Department are set forth at length in Part I of the *Bulletin*, and may be briefly epitomized as the preservation of what is perishable and the careful classification and study of everything perishable or imperishable, which can throw any light on the history, the archæology and the anthropology of a most interesting and certainly no longer 'benighted' province.

M. Louis Finot, Chev. de la Legion d'honneur, Professor, College de France, Toulon, Var, France, wrote to us after reading our first *Bulletin* :

I was delighted to hear of this new departure in the field of Assamese studies, taken with an excellent programme and the best hopes of substantial results. It requires a true courage to launch a scientific series in these unhappy days. May the success reward your gallant enterprise.

We have received encouraging messages from Prof. Dr. M. Walleser, Lt.-Col. L. A. Waddell, Mr. E. J. Rapson,

Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, Sir George A. Grierson, Sir William Foster, and the three retired Assam officers, Sir Edward Gait, Lt.-Col. P. R. T. Gurdon and Mr. J. R. Cunningham.

Dr. Frank W. Padelford, D.D., an educationist of New York, visited the Department's office on February 5, 1933, and expressed his satisfaction after having examined our collection of manuscripts. 'Its value is untold', said Dr. Padelford, animated by the natural zeal for scholarship which distinguishes the alumnies of continental and American Universities.

The Kern Institute of Leyden, Holland, have honoured our Department by sending it regularly their publication *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology*.

It is interesting to note that our Department's activities are watched with interest in far-off China. The Director of the National Library of Peiping (Peking) has placed himself in communication with us. This contact with Chinese scholarship can be made immensely beneficent to historical investigations, in tracing the origins and affinities of the Mongoloid tribes of Assam, and in elucidating from Chinese sources many a dark chapter of the ancient history of Assam.

11. BURMA RESEARCH SOCIETY.—The foreign policy of the kings of Burma had an important effect upon the destiny of Assam; and the forces of the Assamese and Burman kings had confronted each other more than once during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, culminating in the conquest of Assam by the Burmese and the carrying off of 32,000 Assamese captives to Burma. The student of Assam history is anxious to see how these events have been recorded in the voluminous Burmese chronicles commonly known as *Yazawins* or *Rajawins*. We wrote on this subject to Prof. U. P. Maung Tin, M.A., B.Litt., I.E.S., Vice-President of the Burma Research Society, and translator of the *Glass Palace Chronicle*. Through Prof. Maung Tin's instrumentality we have received twenty-one volumes of the *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, since its publication in 1911. One hundred years ago, through the atrocities committed by the camp-followers of Mingimaha Bandula, Mingimaha Nand Kroden, Mingimaha Tilowa Baju, Kamini Phukan, Sham Phukan and Sajati Phukan, the name Burma, or *Mān* in the parlance of the Assamese, was a

dread to our countrymen. This attempt to institute cultural contact forebodes happy auguries in the future.

Burma has become absorbingly interesting to the Assamese in view of the numerous settlements in that province composed of the descendants of the captives carried off more than a hundred years ago. Srijut Purnakanta Buragohain has written a series of articles in the *Assamiya* on the Assamese settlers in Burma. He has also discovered there a large number of Assamese manuscripts preserved till now as family heirlooms among the Assamese sojourners there.

12. PUBLICATION OF BURANJIS OR CHRONICLES.—

The publication of the chronicles which we have already collected will alone keep us busy for years. The trend of narratives in old chronicles cannot be followed by uninitiated readers on account of the multiplicity of facts of a similar character, *viz.*, wars, intrigues and diplomatic negotiations, etc. Considerable difficulties also arise from the archaic character of the language, from the long strings of toponomous and patronymic appellations to indicate the identity of historical personages, generally aggravated by the mixing up of words and sentences, as there are no signs separating them. The reduction of the chaotic mass of materials full of unfamiliar names and expressions to a presentable form, without at the same time making any alteration in the text, is obviously a matter of delay, and requires long practice, discretion and judgment which can be attained only by a close and intimate knowledge of the minutiae of Assam history.

The following processes are involved before a chronicle written on the folios of a *sanchipat* manuscript can be placed on the desk of a reader as a finished ready-made machine product:—transcription of the original; comparison of the transcript with the original to guarantee accuracy; grouping of the transcript into paragraphs and chapters with appropriate headings; collation of the text in the event of there being two or more chronicles containing the same version, so that no important detail or expression having any philological interest may be left out from the final version; correction of orthographical errors which reveal scribal idiosyncrasy rather than a system, rigidly avoiding any correction which will involve phonetic alteration; preparation of a fresh copy for

the press if the transcript has been subjected to heavy alterations and corrections; numbering of the paragraphs; correction of the galley proofs by comparison with the original manuscript so that inaccuracy in the transcript undetected in previous comparisons may have one more chance of being detected; correction of the page-proofs once, twice and even thrice, by comparison with the corrected galley proofs and with press-copies and even originals where necessary; compilation of the title-page, table of contents, preface, errata, etc., and their transcription and proof-reading. We are having a constant eye on the introduction of shorter methods as far as they are compatible with literary accuracy, and the approved traditions of scientific editing of ancient texts.

We have refrained for the present from annotating and commenting on the text which can be better accomplished when a sufficient quantity of original sources of information will be published facilitating the indication of references.

The publication of the Assamese *Buranjis*, when completed, will place at the disposal of students of history a large mass of materials throwing light on the foundation, growth and decline of Ahom power in Assam; on the history and traditions of the Mongoloid tribes who constituted themselves into important political units such as the Cacharis, Jayantias, Chutias, Koches, Naras, etc.; on the numerous principalities and frontier chieftains, who accepted the sovereignty of the Ahoms; on the conflicts between Assam and the invading forces of the Mogul Emperors of Delhi. The *Buranjis* will also supply desultory glimpses into the history of pre-Ahom Assam which will indicate the broad lines of investigations into a comparatively unknown field of study. Events of the Court of Delhi were not excluded by the Assamese Buranjists, and in the class of chronicles known as *Padshah-Buranjis* we have very interesting episodes revealing the glamour and romance of the India of the days of the Muhammadan Sultans and Badshahs. The *Buranjis* have conserved the feelings, struggles, sacrifices, sorrows, joys, customs, manners and institutions of the people of Assam, and couched as they are in a natural and racy prose style they constitute an unrivalled monument of national literature which few other peoples of India possess. To scholars working in a wider field of research,

these *Buranjis* have a peculiar significance inasmuch as they reveal the processes by which the constructive forces of Aryan idealism permeated the institutions of the non-Aryan races of the North-East Frontier of India, as well as the reverse one of the primitive vigour of the Mongoloid tribes leaving their traces on the humanizing and all-embracing tendencies of Aryan culture and civilization.¹

It is because we realize the extreme importance of these existing ancient historical treatises, commonly known as *Buranjis*, in the compilation of which the nobles and literati of the Assam Court had to pore over voluminous masses of state-papers, documents and despatches, that we have undertaken their publication first in our hands, knowing at the same time that modern historical compilations on scientific lines will be possible only when the invaluable sources of information stored in the dilapidated pages of the *Buranjis* are fully utilized. The Department also contemplates to publish English translations of the Assamese chronicles when funds and opportunities permit.

Prof. Allen Johnson in his book *The Historian and Historical Evidence* has thus set forth the importance of well-edited records :

A first-rate historian will wish to go to original sources of information. . . . Historical research has been greatly facilitated, too, by the collection and editing of records, either by private initiative or by the aid of societies. There is a type of scholar hardly known to the general public without whom the writing of history would be well-nigh impossible. It is he who has separated the chaff from the wheat in ancient and mediæval manuscripts, who has established correct texts, who has collected fugitive materials, who has dated and located inscriptions and manuscripts, and who has collated and edited those great collections which are indispensable to the historian of ancient and mediæval times.

¹ For further information regarding Assamese *Buranjis*, see Prof. S. K. Bhuyan's,—(1) *Assamese Historical Literature*, published in 'Indian Historical Quarterly' for September 1929; (2) *New Lights on Mogul India from Assamese Sources*, Introduction, published in 'The Islamic Culture', Hyderabad, Deccan, for July 1928, pp. 324-27; (3) *Ahomar Din*, pp. 89-92; and (4) *History of the Reign of Rajeswar Singha*, Chapter III, *Bankhi*, Vol. XV; and also *The Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology*, Vol. III, published by the Kern Institute, Leyden, Holland, entry No. 324.—'It may be added that only one *Buranji* has been published so far, but that the Assam Government have taken steps to arrange for further publications'.

13. LOCATION OF THE OFFICE.—The venue of the Department's office has shifted from time to time, though for a major portion of the period since its establishment it has been located in the private quarters of Prof. S. K. Bhuyan. It was first started in the office-room attached to the quarters of the Superintendent, Block No. I, Cotton Hindu Hostel, when Prof. Bhuyan held charge of the Hostel. During November and December 1929, when the thatched roof of the Hostel was replaced by corrugated sheets, the office was shifted to a room in the quarters of the Superintendent, Cotton Moslem Hostel, through the courtesy of Maulavi Abul Fazl Syed Ahmad. On Prof. Bhuyan's retirement from the Superintendentship of the Cotton Hindu Hostel in April 1930, the office was held in the drawing-room of his residence at Company Bagan Road, Uzanbazar. In the beginning of 1931 the office was transferred to Prof. Bhuyan's newly constructed house in the immediate neighbourhood of his old quarters.

In the meantime a small room was allotted in the office of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Division, and the Department's office was shifted thereto on February 1, 1932, where it continued till November of that year, after which it was shifted to its old habitation in Prof. Bhuyan's new house. During the hot weather of 1933 the office was held in Commissioner's office-room as Prof. Bhuyan's new house is not fitted with electric fans. During the second week of November 1933 the office was brought again to Prof. Bhuyan's house on the eve of His Excellency the Governor's visit, and it is located there till now.

These constant shiftings have been necessitated by the advantage of the proximity to the Assistant Director's own work-room. The early part of the day up to 2 o'clock in the afternoon is reserved for College work; and as things are situated at present the afternoon hours, holidays and any portion of the earlier hours of the day that can be fortuitously squeezed out of a heavy programme, afford the only opportunity for carrying on the work of the D.H.A.S. The proximity referred to above enables the Assistant Director, or the Honorary Director as the case may be, to carry on his own work and at the same time render supervision and direction in the work of the D.H.A.S. The room in the

Commissioner's office, for the use of which we are grateful to the authorities, is not large enough even to accommodate all our almirahs and tables, a portion of which have always to be stocked elsewhere even when the office is held in that room. The room is convenient for file and correspondence work but the work of the D.H.A.S. requires a reference library always at hand, and a considerable amount of seclusion and repose. The work of the D.H.A.S. is of a character which requires sufficient accommodation and publicity. We have to secure the interest and sympathy of the learned public. We have to sell our books, and so our office has to be made accessible to the public.

The problem of space has engaged our serious attention during recent years. The financial position of our Government, like that of all governments in the world at present, is far from satisfactory. We have to keep the flag flying without putting undue pressure on Government's capacity for payment. Hence in our peroration in Bulletin I we issued an appeal:

The work which the Department is doing at present will form part of the legitimate activities of the research section of the future University of Assam, where they will render the necessary incentive to teachers and students for the attainment of higher degrees and academic laurels. Till then historical research in Assam will be confined to a handful of scholars who have natural aptitude for the same having realized the unlimited field of historical investigations yet unexplored. As for some years to come they are going to be a practically unprofitable concern from the strictly economic point of view, the munificence of the State and of private gentlemen will have to come to the rescue of historical pursuits.

But we are fallen on evil days. The financial embarrassments of the Government have crippled our activities to a great extent and will do so for years to come.

In our misfortune may we not count upon the sympathy of the generous public of Assam in our exertion to resuscitate the past history of the land? When we remember that historical investigations have thriven only under the patronage of the wealthy in the East as well as in the West, we hope our countrymen will come and help us in wading through the present period of financial stringency.

We want money to acquire for the Department a local habitation of its own where we can deposit our historical documents, and in whose secluded and reposeful rooms private

scholars as well as the literary workers of the Department may carry on the work of research and compilation.

14. BUILDING FOR THE D.H.A.S.—The increased demand for a permanent habitation of the Department sufficient to accommodate its collection of manuscripts and transcripts, stock of printed books and its office, with a cluster of rooms for the officers and intending research workers was a great problem. The financial difficulties of the Government do not permit the taking up of any building scheme at present.

The first effort in this direction was made by the Department when Raja Bahadur Hariharprasad Narayan Singha, O.B.E., M.L.C., Raja Bahadur of Amawan and Tikari, stayed for two weeks at Gauhati during April 1933, in the new house of Prof. Bhuyan. The Raja Bahadur was formally requested to make a donation for a building for the Department. We concluded our appeal by saying :

I need not add that this gift will be a fitting souvenir of your visits to Assam and it will elicit the gratitude of the Government and people of Assam ; and the name of the Raja Bahadur of Amawan and Tikari will be resounded throughout the length and breadth of India as a promoter and patron of learning and scholarship ; and the land of Kamarupa and Magadha will be united as of old in one bond of fellowship and good-will.

The Raja Bahadur expressed his sympathy with our work, but on a closer scrutiny of the present finances of his estate on his return to Patna, he found it impossible to make any donation at present. But we are invincible in our optimism, and we look upon the enlightened Raja Bahadur, a premier Zamindar of Bihar, with reputation for generosity all over India, as a potential benefactor of the Department. We only wish, the depression which has retarded (and also accelerated) human progress will find a quick solution.

The honour of being the first donor of the Department was, however, reserved for a countryman of ours. Rai Bahadur Radhakanta Handiqui has already shown his earnest solicitude for the cultural uplift of his country by the gift of the Chandrakanta Institute at Jorhat, where the central office of the Assam Sahitya-Sabha is located, and by the endowment with the help of which the *Chandrakanta Abhidhan*

has been compiled and published. He has, besides, erected a building at a cost of nearly 40,000 rupees for the housing of the library and study of his eldest son Mr. Krishnakanta Handiqui, who after obtaining his well-deserved laurels in the University of Calcutta embellished them by an Oxford degree, and by several years of residence in the well-known Universities of Europe to give a finishing touch to his linguistic attainments. Rai Bahadur Handiqui's third son Mr. Lakshmikanta Handiqui pursued a course of study in agriculture at Glasgow. Their mother Mrs. Narayani Handiqui has the reputation of being an ideal Assamese matron, to which she combines an animated and generous sympathy for matters cultural. The patriotic donor intends to associate Mrs. Handiqui's name with the Department's building.

The life of the Rai Bahadur is itself a study of supreme value to his countrymen. From a humble position in life he rose to be an eminent and trusted official of the Government. He has, besides, reared a tea garden, which, due to the careful supervision and management of the proprietor, has maintained its solvency even in these days of crisis. The Rai Bahadur firmly believes that the resources of a wealthy man are for the benefit of the public, and his numerous public-spirited actions offer a tangible evidence of his philanthropic intent. He has loosened his purse-string for the advancement of the literature and history of his country and his name will serve as an inspiration to the wealthy section of our countrymen who are also endowed with the noble desire to promote the cultural well-being of their motherland. We can reasonably expect that with this example and inspiration at our command no cherished project of the Department will remain unfulfilled for want of financial assistance.

Arrangements are being made for acquiring a suitable site for constructing the building. There will be accommodation in the building for the office of the Department, sale-room, stock of printed books and collection of manuscripts, officers' rooms, research workers' rooms, library and visitors' ante-rooms. It is desired that the building will form part of the premises of the future Assam University, in order that it may have the advantage of the permanent association, control and supervision of the University's academic body.

15. LIBRARY OF THE DEPARTMENT.—During the few years of its existence the Department has been able to build up a small library of its own, through the generosity and courtesy of private owners and learned societies. Now that we hold a sufficient stock of our own publications we hope to persuade institutions established with the object of promoting studies in Orientology to present us with copies of their journals and books.

We are grateful to Mr. T. P. M. O'Callaghan, C.I.E., Inspector-General of Police, Assam, for having presented a number of interesting and valuable books to Prof. Bhuyan for 'complete personal disposal—to retain or present to any institution or person to whom they would be of interest'. The books were sent in three instalments, and they have reached our hands through the courtesy of Mr. B. H. Routledge, I.P., Superintendent of Police, Kamrup, and Major J. L. Donnelly, M.B., Ch.B., M.Ch., I.M.S., Civil Surgeon, Kamrup. Prof. Bhuyan has in his turn presented them to the D.H.A.S. Library.

16. CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.—To expand the scope and activities of the Department, several gentlemen interested in historical research have been appointed Corresponding Members of the Department. Their duties have been generally defined as follows :

We trust that Corresponding Members will be ready to help the Department with their advice and suggestions from time to time ; that they will keep us informed of any historical relic or manuscript, the acquisition of which is, in their opinion, desirable, and that they will bring to the notice of the Department any unpublished historical manuscript, inscription or similar object, the publication of which will contribute to the advancement of historical knowledge, specially with regard to our province ; that in short the Department and its Corresponding Members will represent an association of scholars all working for the objects with which the Department was established.

The following gentlemen have kindly expressed their willingness to act as Corresponding Members of the Department :—

1. Sir Edward Gait, K.C.S.I., I.C.S. (Retired), The Croft Park Hill, Ealing, W. 5, England.
2. Srijut Lakshminath Bezbarua, B.A., Sambalpur, B.N.R.

3. Lt.-Col. P. R. T. Gurdon, I.A. (Retired), C.S.I., Spring Grove, Marden, Kent, England.
4. Dr. J. H. Hutton, I.C.S., M.A., D.Sc., C.I.E., Census Commissioner, New Delhi.
5. Rai Bahadur Padmanath Gohain-Barua, M.R.A.S., Government Literary Pensioner, Tezpur.
6. Srijut Hiteswar Barbarua, P.O. Suklatanga, Upper Assam.
7. Srijut Kaliram Medhi, M.A., Extra Assistant Commissioner, Dhubri.
8. Srijut Benudhar Rajkhowa, B.A., Extra Assistant Commissioner (Retired), Dibrugarh.
9. Rai Bahadur Anandachandra Agarwalla, I.P. (Retired), Tezpur.
10. Srijut Saratchandra Goswami, B.A., B.T., Inspector of Schools, Jorhat.
11. Srijut Rajanikanta Bardaloi, B.A., Extra Assistant Commissioner (Retired), Dibrugarh.
12. Srijut Rajanikumar Padmapati, Government Pensioner, Tezpur.
13. Rai Sahib Bharatchandra Chaudhury, Superintendent, Normal Training School (Retired), Silchar.
14. Babu Bhubanmohan Sen, M.A., Professor of History, Cotton College, Gauhati.
15. Maulavi Mufizuddin Ahmed Hazarika, Government Literary Pensioner, Dibrugarh.
16. Khan Bahadur Dewan Mahammad Wasil Chaudhuri, Deputy Inspector of Schools (Retired), and Zeminder, Habiganj, Sylhet.
17. The Honorary Secretary, Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati.
18. Srijut Benudhar Sarma, P.O. Charing, Sibsagar.
19. Mr. Krishnakanta Handiqui, M.A. (Oxon. and Cal.), Principal, Jorhat College, Jorhat.
20. The Honorary Secretary, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat.
21. Srijut Harinarayan Datta-Barua, Teacher, Normal Training School, Jorhat.
22. Srijut Banikanta Kakati, M.A., Professor, Cotton College, Gauhati.
23. Srijut Sonaram Chaudhury, Government Pensioner, Rangmahal, North Gauhati.
24. Srijut Sarveswar Kataki, Sub-Inspector of Schools, Gauhati.
25. The Hon'ble Maulavi Faiznur Ali, President of the Assam Legislative Council, Dibrugarh.
26. Srijut Kshetradhar Bargohain, B.A., S.D.C., Dibrugarh.
27. Srijut Chintaharan Patgiri, Head Master, Barnagar M.E. School, P.O. Sarbhog.

28. Srijut Ambikanath Borah, M.A., Lecturer in Assamese, Calcutta University, Calcutta.
29. Srijut Kirtinath Bardaloi, Jorhat.
30. Srijut Nilmani Phukan, B.A., Jorhat.
31. Srijut Umakanta Goswami, M.A., B.L., Professor, Cotton College, Gauhati.
32. Srijut Mathuranath Goswami, M.A., B.L., Lecturer, Cotton College, Gauhati.
33. Mr. R. R. Thomas, M.A., B.L., P.R.S., Professor, Cotton College, Gauhati.
34. Mr. Wahengbam Yumjao Singh, Imphal, Manipur.
35. Srijut Padmadhar Chaliha, M.A., B.L., Gauhati.
36. Maulavi Ataur Rahman, M.A., Assistant to the D.P.I., Assam, for Muhammadan Education, Shillong.

The Department has in contemplation the holding of an annual meeting of all the Corresponding Members where papers will be read, manuscripts and other historical relics exhibited and the general programme of the Department's activities formulated. The literary meetings will be opened to the public while the business meetings dealing with the Department's programme will be confined to the Corresponding and Co-opted Members. The venue of the meeting will be at different parts of the province in order to stimulate interest in historical research at different centres. At each session local gentlemen and ladies interested in historical research will be appointed Co-opted Members for the purpose of the session. Its proceedings will be conducted on the lines of the annual sittings of the Indian Historical Records Commission. The financial difficulties through which we are passing at present have not made it possible to carry out this cherished project of ours.

17. ANTIQUARIAN SURVEY IN NOWGONG AND GOALPARA.—In June 1933 the Department initiated measures to collect information about the antiquities of two districts of Assam. To stimulate interest in historical research the different districts of Assam are proposed to be subjected to concentrated scrutiny. An antiquarian survey of the territories under the East India Company was undertaken in 1807-14 by Dr. Francis Buchanan-Hamilton. His extensive reports, most of them in manuscript, have been preserved in the India Office Library, London. A portion has been incorporated in Montgomery Martin's *Eastern India*, 1838, where the editor's eclecticism

has been seriously questioned in many quarters. Buchanan-Hamilton did not come to Assam, but the report which he wrote about our province sitting in his camp in the Bengal district of Rungpoor bears evidence of his thoroughness and insight.¹ The volumes containing the results of antiquarian surveys of Rajputana offer a valuable specimen for guidance in similar projects elsewhere.

We first selected Nowgong and Goalpara. They are the two smallest districts of Assam, and very little has been done towards exploring the historical possibilities there. We were fortunate in having two workers Srijut Birinchikumar Barua, B.A. and Srijut Sarveswar Kataki, who volunteered their services for undertaking surveys of the two districts.

The survey of Nowgong was limited down to the Kapili and Jamuna valleys which contain ruins and relics testifying to the existence of a Hindu kingdom, possibly named Davaka, in that area in very ancient times.²

After examining the proposals submitted by Mr. Barua and Mr. Kataki the Department decided to arrange for a preliminary survey of the two districts and sanctioned an honorarium to be paid on the submission of their report containing the results of their survey. The terms of the offer were laid down as follows :

The report is to embody a sufficient amount of fresh and accurate information acquired first-hand. The report is to contain lists, descriptions, etc., of all relics, documents, traditions, legends, etc. and any other thing of historical importance. Among others mention is to be made of the following :—

- (1) Archæological remains : forts, ramparts, temples, palaces, rock inscriptions.
- (2) Copperplate inscriptions, with copies or impressions where acquisition is impossible.

¹ Buchanan-Hamilton's Manuscript Note on Ancient Kamarupa compiled during his survey has been inserted in our *Kamrupar Buranji*, through the courtesy of the India Office Library, London.

² The possibility of the present Davakā in Nowgong being identical with the Davāka of Samudragupta's inscription was first pointed out by me in my article *Glimpses into the History of Kamarupa from the inscriptions of Northern India*, published in the Assam Sahitya-Sabha Patrika, Vol. II, pp. 175-6. The matter has now been taken up seriously by other enquirers.—S.K.B.

- (3) Historical sites and places associated with notable events of the past.
- (4) Ancient manuscripts written in any language and character with full particulars as to the owners' intention to permanently or temporarily part with them, and the price or consideration which they want for that purpose.
- (5) Sanads and Firmans of the Muhammadan Emperors of India or their deputies, with copies where acquisition is impossible.
- (6) Ancient war materials and implements.
- (7) Articles used as household furniture in ancient times.
- (8) Ballads, folk-songs, folk-tales, legends and traditions.
- (9) Coins, with facsimiles where acquisition is impossible.
- (10) Stone images and carvings on stones.
- (11) Old specimens of ivory and filigree work.

All lists should be accompanied by descriptions of the objects referred to. The report should be accompanied by photographs where possible.

The reports of Mr. Barua and Mr. Kataki have been meanwhile received and they are under examination.

We admit we cannot at present initiate a very intensive and extensive survey for want of funds. With our experience gained from the districts of Nowgong and Goalpara we propose to extend our survey to other districts of Assam. The various reports will be published subsequently in book-form when funds permit.

18. MEITHI MANUSCRIPTS.—On the recommendation made by Mr. J. C. Higgins, C.I.E., I.C.S., while Political Agent, Manipur, the Department decided to finance the compilation and publication of some valuable Meithi manuscripts brought to light by the members of the American Baptist Mission stationed at Imphal. But the work has been held up at present as Rev. W. Pettigrew, who was entrusted with it has to remain absent from Manipur on account of the illness of Mrs. Pettigrew. Mr. C. Gimson, I.C.S., now Political Agent, Manipur, is taking great interest in the work, and we hope it will be brought to completion within the near future. We are glad to note that Mr. Wahengbam Yumjao Singh, a Manipuri scholar, is helping in the preparation of the above monograph.

Pandit Atam Bapu Vidyaratna of Manipur has submitted to the Department a treatise in English entitled *Meithai Hare*

Maye or an account of the settlement of the Meithai race into Manipur with side-lights of their ancient culture.

19. PREPARATION OF A HISTORICAL MAP OF ASSAM.—To properly understand the trend of narratives in our chronicles and historical treatises a map is of supreme importance. The march of an expedition, the venue of a battle, the distribution of the local administrators and military commanders, occasional changes in boundaries, etc. cannot be fully comprehended without a map; and it is high time that such a map should be prepared with the help of the existing topographical, circle, district and provincial maps, supported by historical data. The *Statesman* in reviewing *Tungkhungia Buranji*, English Translation, concluded by saying,—‘Will Professor Bhuyan some day give us a map of ancient Assam? One is very badly needed’.¹ The desirability of compiling such a map has also been pointed out to us by Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck, Mr. J. P. Mills and Mr. H. G. Dennehy. The D.H.A.S. has taken up the work of preparing such a map.

Some spade-work has been done in this direction. Major James Rennell’s Map of 1765 will be a helpful basis. In 1800 Dr. J. P. Wade compiled *Geographical Sketch of Assam*, and the original manuscript is now deposited at the India Office. This record was borrowed in 1927 by the Assam Government through the initiative of Mr. J. R. Cunningham and was placed at our disposal. The whole treatise—a very crude first draft—was edited by me with introduction and notes, and published as a serial in the *Assam Review* for 1928 and 1929 under the heading *Assam in the Eighteenth Century*. We are also arranging to borrow from the India Office the unpublished document, ‘Topography of Assam’, compiled in 1824 by Lt.-Col. F. Wood, and ‘Geographical Plan of the North-East Frontier of Bengal with part of Assam’.

20. OUR DIFFICULTIES.—Historical research presupposes the employment of a critical technique, and hence it is a matter for experts, who also foresee the importance of things long

¹ *The Statesman* wrote again in the issue of January 7, 1934,—‘When reviewing the book *Tungkhungia Buranji* our reviewer on December 10, lamented the lack of a good map of old Assam. Those interested will find such a map in ‘Shakespeare’s History of Upper Assam, etc.’. (Macmillan, 1914.)

before their lay contemporaries can estimate their value. In a province where the first full-fledged College came with the advent of the Century, which has still no University of its own, and where the study of provincial history does not extend beyond the last two classes of the High School course, we do not expect that our work will attain the popularity we generally associate with Fleet Street feuilletonisms and Vaudeville gaieties. Our eyes are riveted on posterity whose gratefulness we shall share in proportion to the heritage we leave behind. As for our contemporaries the active support of 'a fit audience, though few' is all that we count upon. We are, however, trying to effect a compromise between technical appreciation and popular appeal. It does not require any prophetic prevision to declare that historical activities in Assam will attain during the course of another decade a legitimate place in our programme of cultural uplift and national regeneration, as well as a guaranteed position in our educational syllabus.

There is a feeling that the study of the history of a small province like Assam is not so valuable as that of bigger states and empires. This feeling, lamentable though it be, accounts for the omission of provincial history in the Matriculation, Intermediate and B.A. Examinations. We do not like to minimize the importance of the histories of Rome, Greece, England, Modern Europe or of India as a whole. They certainly contribute to the expansion of our mental outlook enabling us to see things in their proper perspective. But they do not form any organic part of the post-university life of the intelligentsia of Assam, neither are they constantly refreshed, recalled and revived in the experiences of our countrymen during their professional careers; hence their value is mainly limited to academic necessity. Character, wisdom and vigilance can be formed only by the application of what we have learnt in the college to surroundings in which we are placed in our struggle for existence. The officer or publicist who has a masterly knowledge of the economic condition of the Assamese ryats will be better able to deal with them with sympathy and understanding than one who has on the tips of his fingers the wage returns or the vital statistics of New York and Manchester, but is bereft of any knowledge of our farmers and cultivators. If he is thoroughly

conversant with the past history of Assam, the peoples and places of the province will serve as constant reminders and reminiscent echoes of what he had learnt in the college.

The extreme necessity of a knowledge of local or provincial history has been most emphatically described by Mr. J. D. B. Gribble in the preface to his *History of the Deccan* :

I was first struck with the necessity of a work of this kind by a conversation with the son of a Hyderabad Nobleman who had just finished his study in the Nizam's College. I asked him who was the first of the Bahmanee Sultans of Gulburge, and he said that he did not know there had been any. He was equally ignorant of the fate of the last King of Golconda, although the remains of the old royal fortress are within an hour's drive of the city where he lived ! In our Indian schools and colleges we teach the broad outlines of Indian history, but we pay very little attention to the details of the history of the different provinces. Now it seems to me that it is as essential for a Deccan boy to know something of the early history of that part of the country in which he lives, as it is for him to know about Akbar, Aurangzebe, Clive or Warren Hastings. In the same way a Poonah boy should be thoroughly grounded in the history of the Mahrattas, and a Bangalore boy in that of Mysore. In the schools of Europe a boy goes through a detailed course of the history of his own country, and is only given a general outline of the history of other nations. In India, the reverse seems to be the case. A general system is laid down for the whole of India, which does not embrace local and provincial history. The present volume therefore is an attempt to make Deccan readers more familiar with the history of their own country.

Mr. K. P. Jayaswal, in his speech delivered as President of the Seventh Indian Oriental Conference, held at Baroda in December 1933, emphasized the importance of provincial history when he said,—‘ Within the last few years the attention of Indian historians has been drawn towards composing text-books on individual provinces or dynasties. This scheme affords scope for intensive studies, and our notions become more definite.’

The publication of source-books is a pioneering work, and the spade-worker is doomed to supersession and oblivion owing to the greater importance that is attached to constructive works. Hence some people rush to reconstruct the past without sufficient evidentiary materials and data at their

disposal, which amounts to putting the cart before the horse. The pioneer is a martyr to his cause but the fortunate scientific historian cannot achieve anything of enduring value without the materials stacked and gathered by the pioneer's labours. The work of a historian is exposed to his limitations, including the four *Idolas* enunciated by Lord Bacon. The existence of a mass of contemporary records affords the only safeguard to prevent the operation of individual sympathies and affiliations, or what Lecky says, 'the unfair distribution of lights and shades'. For some years to come historical activities in Assam should be directed towards the unearthing of the available data, thus making it possible for the architect to erect the huge edifice of our past. Prof. Frederick J. Teggart has, in his *Theory of History*, made a clear exposition of the historian's work when he says,—'Historical work involves, first, the critical examination of the documentary sources of information, and second, history-writing or historiography'.

'History makes man wise.' 'History is philosophy taught by examples.' These are at best half-understood truisms; very few people realize the direction through which wisdom filters as a consequence of the study of history; or the manner in which war, bloodshed, dynastic overthrows and political convulsions can approach the ethereal heights of pure philosophy.

The message which the past history of Assam brings to the door of us moderns, will prevent the repetition of the blunders which we committed, the effects of which have permeated every artery of our present national life. History will enable us to form a proper notion of our weakness and strength, and their elimination, reinforcement and compromise will lead us onward in the path of progress. At intervals a nation should take stock of its achievements and failures; and these intervals, a century or a millenium in the life of a nation, are like a day or a year in our individual existence. Rightly has Frederick Harrison observed,—'All our hopes of the future depend on a sound understanding of the past'.

In addition to the difficulties arising from minimization or misconception of the importance of provincial history, we have experienced numerous handicaps for pressure of

time. The scope for historical activities is unlimited. An intelligent study of the title-heads in the catalogues of Heffer, Luzac, Probsthain, Galloway and Porter, Harrassowitz, and of the Oriental Societies spread over the world, will acquaint us with the numerous variety of subjects which can be brought under historical scrutiny. We have to educate our countrymen in the importance of historical studies in order that we may be able to keep pace with, or even form the rear-guard of the advanced nations of the world. In our attempt to execute even a fraction of the mental image of our desiderata we have been confronted with the serious problem of time. Now for the first time we realize why the ancestors of man conceived multi-handed, multi-faced and hydra-headed gods and monsters.

The Department's work involves two distinct sections,—the running of the official machinery involving correspondence, book-keeping, publicity efforts, etc. and the scholarly work of collating, editing and compiling historical classics, source-books and treatises. At times we fear our main purpose may be obscured by the constant attention we have to pay to the routine. Besides, the Directorate, in spite of their best zeal and self-sacrifice, have to serve other masters for the maintenance of themselves and their dependents. A solution of the problem of time will undoubtedly lead to the intensification of efforts for increasing the activities of the Department. The difficulties indicated in the above paragraphs have been fully stated in our estimate of the life-work of the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami, prefixed to the first volume of his *Typical Selections from Assamese Literature* :

Mr. Goswami's literary performance is in the main critical and editorial, though in his earlier years he wrote verses with considerable ease and spontaneity. He was chiefly engaged in supplying the raw materials with the help of which constructive and scientific criticism may be undertaken in future when more materials will be forthcoming. He was bewildered at the sight of the immense mine of sources and data for a history of Assam and of Assamese language and literature. Large numbers of manuscripts representing the culture and civilization of Assam are lying untraced and forgotten in the archives of Assamese families, besides numerous inscriptions and archaeological relics scattered throughout this hoary land of Kamarupa. The first task of the historical pioneer in

Assam is to collect the data now readily available but which will be effaced during the course of a few decades. Hemchandra's performance has the risk of being superseded by the more critical, scientific and academic attempts of future workers; but their value will lie chiefly in the fact that they have been able to rouse and maintain a sustained interest in historical investigations in Assam. The achievement of the pioneer or spade-worker is as laudable as that of the constructive historian, the latter being impossible without the former. The pioneer is a martyr to his cause while the fortunate reconstructor reaps the fruit of his earlier pathfinder's labours. While the majority of his countrymen remained deeply engrossed in worldly pursuits, Hemchandra's life was dominated by an overwhelming, if not fanatical, zeal for research. He had to create his own facilities. The arduous duties of a judicial officer could not hold him back from the performance of what, he thought, was his life's mission. He will live in the grateful remembrance of posterity, not as an efficient revenue officer or magistrate, but as an earnest and zealous Assamese worker whose patriotism was primarily directed towards the revivification of the glorious past of his motherland. The regrettable spectacle of Hemchandra poring over official files or over the contending versions of deponents,—Hemchandra who by his natural equipment and taste could have performed tasks of more enduring and permanent importance—was nothing short of a national calamity.—*Published by Calcutta University.*

A young friend of mine, at the outset of his career and with his living in part to be earned, went for advice to Carl Schurz, who was very fond of him. 'What is your aim?' asked Mr. Schurz. 'I purpose being a historian', was the reply. 'Aha!' laughed Schurz, 'you are adopting an aristocratic profession, one which requires a rent-roll'.—*Dr. James Ford Rhodes, LL.D., D.Litt., in 'The Profession of a Historian'.*

PART III.

Department's Collection of Manuscripts.

I. MANUSCRIPTS PREVIOUSLY COLLECTED.

In Bulletin I, pp. 27-43, we inserted a list of sixty-one manuscripts and seventy-seven transcripts, collected by the Department between July 1929 and December 1931. The transcripts were prepared by the Department's staff and casual assistants, from the original manuscripts in our possession or from the original transcripts obtained from their owners. A consolidated descriptive list of all the manuscripts collected to date is in preparation. We note below the important items from this old collection :

The manuscripts included,—

- (1) Twenty-nine manuscripts written in the practically obsolete Ahom language, dealing with history, astrology, cosmogony, rituals, mantras and divination; two of them were Ahom lexicons,—*Bar-Amra* from Ahom to Assamese, and *Lati-Amra* from Assamese to Ahom. One of these manuscripts was on Muga cloth.
- (2) Thirty old Assamese manuscript chronicles or Buranjis, dealing with the history of the Ahoms, their administrative system, Mogul wars, relation with frontier tribes, etc. Their contents are supplementary in character, and repetitions are rare. Two of them were metrical chronicles.

The transcripts included,—

- (1) Forty-four Assamese chronicles or Buranjis, some of them were complete histories, while others dealt with specified periods or subjects. One of them was a chronicle of the Emperors of Delhi.
- (2) Two Ahom-Assamese and Assamese-Ahom dictionaries, *Bar-Amra* and *Lati-Amra*.
- (3) Two volumes of historical letters interchanged between the Ahom and foreign courts.
- (4) Colonel White's Historical Miscellany, compiled in 1834. It deals with the resources, geographical divisions, history and economic condition of the people.
- (5) Several volumes of the Diary of the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami.
- (6) East India Company's Records, obtained from India Office Library and the Imperial Record Department, viz., Buchanan-Hamilton's *General View of the History and Manners of Kamarupa*; J. P. Wade's *Account of Assam and Geographical Sketch of Assam*; Captain Welsh's *Report on the Administrative System of the Ahoms*; King

Gaurinath Singha's Treaty with the East India Company, 1794; Assam in 1792 and 1797.

- (7) Two articles from oriental journals,—Assam since the Expulsion of the Burmese, published in the *Calcutta Review* of 1853; and Assam in 1837, published in *Chinese Repertory*.

2. OUR NEW COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS.

The manuscripts noted below have been obtained from different places and individuals between January 1932 and January 1934 :

A. CHANGCHOKI COLLECTION.—In July 1933 Srijut Basudev Misra of our Department's staff was deputed to Changchoki village near Kampur Railway Station, A.B.R., on information about the existence of manuscripts there received from Srijut Bhubanchandra Phukan. Mr. Misra remained in the village only for two days, July 2 and 3, and he came back with forty manuscripts named below :

1. From Srijut Bhogram Gaonburah, Patiapam—

(1) Ramayan, Patal-kanda and Swargarohan-kanda ; (2) Ramayan, Lanka-kanda, etc.

2. From Srijut Laksheswar Saikia, Patiapam—

(1) Yudhisthir Raja-suya-yajna ; (2) Gunamala ; (3) Amrit-mathan Nat ; (4) Dadhi-mathan Nat ; (5) Sankardevar Janma-yatra Nat ; (6) Syamanta-haran ; (7) Bhojan-vyavahara Nat ; (8) Bhusan-charitra ; (9) Parijat-haran Nat ; (10) Tamradhwaj ; (11) Gu-karati.

3. From Srijut Ganapati Dev Sarma, Changchoki—

(1) Bhagavat-Gita ; (2) Jyotish-ratnamala ; (3) Adbhut ; (4) Adbhut-charit ; (5) Gita-Govinda, Sanskrit ; (6) Gita-Govinda, commentary ; (7) Gita-Govinda in Bengali verse ; (8) Mantra Puthi ; (9) Ekodista Sraddha-bidhi ; (10) Namghosha.

4. From Srijut Maheswar Saikia, Changchoki—

(1) Kurmavali-badh ; (2) Kumar-haran Nat.

5. From Srijut Chandrakanta Sarma, Changchoki—

(1) Pad-Bhagavat ; (2) Ratnamala Vyakaran.

6. From Srijut Divakar Ahom, Changchoki—

(1) Markandeya Puran ; (2) Karna-parva ; (3) Vaishnavamrit ; (4) Lakshman-saktisel.

7. From Srijut Bhilikanta Majumdar, Changchoki—

(1) Harischandra-upakhyana Nat ; (2) Rash-yatra Nat ; (3) Kulachal-badh Nat ; (4) Parijat-haran Nat ; (5) Sindhura-parva Nat ; (6) Bhishma-parva Nat.

8. From Srijut Khageswar Majumdar, Changchoki—

(1) Naradiya Puran ; (2) Bana-parva ; (3) Bejali Puthi.

B. NAZIRA COLLECTION.—On November 26, 1933, Prof. Bhuyan met Srijut Chidananda Bezbarua and his cousin Srijut Benudhar Bezbarua at Nazira. They are descended from Bisweswar Vaidyadhipa, the author of the metrical chronicle *Belimarar Buranji* inserted in our *Asamar Padya-Buranji*, and as the remnant of a powerful and cultured family they have preserved a good collection of Assamese manuscripts. Some manuscripts once in possession of their ancestors have been traced in the Assamese villages in Burma. I am indebted to Srijut Kirtinath Bardaloi's kind mediation in obtaining the manuscripts mentioned below from the Nazira Bezbarua family. Most of the manuscripts are of a fragmentary character. Some of them have only one or two folios out of a much larger number of folios in the corresponding original manuscripts. The folios themselves are incoherently scattered and they have since been assorted by the Department's staff,—

(1) Sitala; (2) Batuk; (3) Narayan Kavach; (4) Gajendra Stava; (5) Sarva-jaya Kavach; (6) Pandav Gita; (7) Jatimala; (8) Skanda Puran; (9) Chikitsa Samhita; (10) Nilakantha Stotra; (11) Ban-mara Mantra; (12) Har-kata Mantra; (13) Alakhanir Mantra; (14) Nidan Samgraha; (15) Siva-rahasya Samhita; (16) Astadasa-puranar Sloka-samkhyā; (17) Narasingha Mantra; (18) Khetra Mantra; (19) Navagraha Homa-bidhi; (20) Lagna-phala Varnana; (21) Nidan; (22) Navagraha Puja-bidhi; (23) Jatimala; (24) Adbhut Sagar; (25) Bandha Mantra; (26) Vishnur Abhedha Kavach; (27) Sanir Stotra; (28) Durga-stotra; (29) Ratnamala, Sandhi-vinyas; (30) Swapna-phal; (31) Jyotish Puthi; (32) Dwadas-rasir-phal; (33) Jatanirnaya; (34) Dak-charit; (35) Chatur-dasanga; (36) Mantra Puthi; (37) Kavach; (38) Daravar Puthi; (39) Snana-bidhi Proyoga; (40) Gayatrī-r-sapa-mochan; (41) Khetra-markuchiya Oushadh aru Khetra-kheda Mantra; (42) Samudra-lakshan; (43) Apadevatar Oushadh; (44) Khetrar-dhumbandha Mantra; (45) Navagraha Puja-bidhi; (46) Mahantar-adikatha; (47) Narasingha Kavach; (48) Adbhut-darsan aru Yugotpatti; (49) Swapnadhyaya; (50) Jyotish; (51) Adbhut; (52) Jyotish Sastra; (53) Grahapuja-Bidhi and (54) some scattered folios,—Sahasra-sirsha-puja, Batuk Bij-mantra, Navagrahar-dan, Kharika-ban, Daivajnar katha-thaka saptadas pustakar nam, Khetrapakar Oushadh, Gitar Tatwa, Ganana Puthi, Mantra Puthi, Kali-yugar samkhyā, Pancha-pallav-dan, (55) Assam Buranji, chronology, from 1468 to 1753.

C. PURANIGUDAM COLLECTION.—On November 24, 1933, Prof. S. K. Bhuyan, on his way to Jorhat, visited the house of Srijut Baparam Sarma Thakur Pandit at Haibargaon, Puranigudam, in the district of Nowgong, who was reported to have in possession a large number of manuscripts. The owner made over the following manuscripts to Prof. Bhuyan on his way back to Gauhati,—

(1) Tithi-tatwa, Smriti-tatwa; (2) Dasakarma Pungsaban; (3) Asouch-nirnaya; (4) Batuk, Nilakantha-mahimna; (5) Tithi-tatwa; (6) Jyotish; (7) Krit; (8) Graha-jajna; (9) Gita; (10) Nandi-mukh, Vivaha-vidhi, Upanayana-vidhi, Graha-jajna; (11) Sahasra-nama-mahimna; (12) Graha-stava; (13) Mangal-chowa; (14) Smriti-padma; (15) Prayaschitta-vidhi; (16) Vivaha-pad-dhati; (17) Prayaschitta-nirghanta; (18) Durga-sahasra-nam and Siva-sahasra-nam.

D. PANIPHUKAN'S MANUSCRIPT.—During Prof. Bhuyan's stay at Sibsagar, October 9–12, 1933, he learnt through Srijut Benudhar Sarma that the Paniphukan family living at Mathiachinga near Nazira possess a number of old Buranjis. On October 11, he paid a visit to Mathiachinga in the company of Srijuts Benudhar Sarma, Laksheswar Sarma, B.A., E.A.C., and Umakanta Sarma, B.A., S.D.C. Owing to the absence of Srijut Mahendranath Phukan, the head of the family, his younger brother Srijut Chandrakanta Phukan was not in a position to say anything about the manuscripts. On November 26, Prof. Bhuyan again visited Mathiachinga in the company of Mr. Krishnakanta Handiqui, Srijut Kirtinath Bardaloi and Maulavi Abul Fazl Syed Ahmad. Srijut Mahendranath Phukan being absent, his brother Srijut Chandrakanta Phukan handed over an old Assamese manuscript dealing with the diseases of hawks and their remedies. Hawk-flight¹ was a regular pastime of Ahom Rajas, and a special department known as the Senchowa *khel*, and numerous aviaries or *charai-chongs* were maintained at State expense. The present manuscript will thus be a valuable specimen of Assamese treatises on veterinary science, and the indigenous medicines prescribed therein may be taken up in the treatment of birds, at least as an experimental measure.

E. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE COLLECTION.—The scheme for editing and translating old Assamese classics inaugurated by Mr. H. C. Barnes and Mr. H. C. Goswami was formerly executed through the Commissioner, Assam Valley Division, and several manuscripts and transcripts had been deposited in his office. They were made over to the Department during the period under review,—

(1) Hasti-vidyarnava, manuscript; (2) Hasti-vidyarnava, transcript; (3) Hasti-vidyarnava, English translation, abridged, by Prof. U. K. Goswami; (4) Swarganarayan Janma-charit, transcript; (5) Swarganarayan Janma-charit, English translation by Prof. U. K. Goswami, revised by Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck; (6) Kitavat Manjari; (7) Ghorar Oushadhar Pustak.

¹ Vide *Deodhai Asam Buranji*, p. xv of the Introduction, and pp. 137–142 of the text.

F. MANIRAM DEWAN'S ASSAM BURANJI.—The Department acquired from Srijut Trailokyasobhan Chandra Goswami, Sarujana Dihing Satradhikar of North Gauhati, the original manuscript of the second part of Maniram Dewan's *Buranji-Viveka-Ratna* or *Assam Buranji*, compiled in 1838 A.D. The book deals mainly with the following subjects:

1. Religion of Ancient Kamarupa. Social customs. Division of castes.
2. Establishment of the various Vaishnava Satras. Propagation of Bhagavatism.
3. Introduction of Saktaism into Assam. Parvattia, Mukalimuria and Pahumaria Gosains.
4. Origin of the hereditary Ahom noble families.
5. Ceremonies connected with the appointment and dismissal of Dangarias and Kings.
6. Functions and duties of Dangarias, Barbarua, Barphukan, Phukans, Baruas, Rajkhowas, Barbhandar officers, Meldagia Phukans and Baruas, the four Panisias of Gauhati.
7. The King's ascension of Singarighar; coining on the coronation day.
8. Sankardeva and Madhabdeva; their lives, their doctrines and their Samhatis; the forms and rituals of the four Samhatis; initiation ceremonies.
9. Bar-mel or the Big Council of the King; its procedure and deliberations.
10. History of 'Matak-dauratmya' or the Moamaria insurrection; origin and development; various phases and incidents.
11. Rise of the Tungkhungia Family.
12. Enthronement and coronation of Ahom Kings.
13. Planting of Ao-bar or Ayu-bar or the banyan tree of longevity.
14. The annual religious celebrations of the Ahoms.
15. Gadadhar Singha's wanderings as a fugitive. His reign.
16. Origin of the Jayantia Rajas.
17. Origin of the Kachari Rajas.
18. Origin of the Meches or Koches: Koch Behar, Darrang, Bijni, Beltola.
19. Reign of Rudra Singha: Siva Singha: Pramatta Singha: Rajeswar Singha: Lakshmi Singha: Gaurinath Singha.
20. Origin of opium according to Brahmanda-puran; how it was brought to Assam by Langi Barphukan from Western India, about 1630.
21. Captain Welsh's expedition to Assam.
22. Reign of Kamaleswar Singha.
23. Rituals of the Ritia Sect, or Bamachari Tantrik Pantha.
24. Reign of Chandrakanta Singha; flight of Badanchandra; Purnananda's death; Burmese atrocities.
25. David Scott in Assam; Col. Richards.
26. Useful Tables: Sukapha's companions; Ahom Kings; Bargohains; Buragohains; Barpatra-Gohain.

A transcript of the original manuscript prepared by Srijut Upendrachandra Lekharu, B.L., was also acquired at the same time.

G. PADMESWAR PHUKAN'S ASSAM BURANJI.—During Mr. Bentinck's stay at Sibsagar in April 1932 he was informed by us that Srijut Chandreswar Nao-baicha Phukan of that town has in his possession a voluminous history of Assam compiled by his father the late Srijut Padmeswar Sing Nao-baicha Phukan. Through the efforts of Mr. A. H. S. Fletcher, I.C.S., Sub-Divisional Officer, and Srijut Chandrakamal Bhuyan, E.A.C., the manuscript was obtained from Mr. Phukan for the preliminary examination of the Honorary Provincial Director. Mr. Bentinck returned the manuscript, and it has been borrowed again for examination. The book contains a large mass of information on Ahom history and allied matters. An expurgated edition of the Buranji will be valuable.

H. INDIA OFFICE MANUSCRIPTS.—In September 1932 the Department arranged to borrow from the India Office Library, London, the three Assamese manuscripts mentioned in J. F. Blumhardt's *Catalogue of the Bengali and Assamese Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, pp. 17-18. They were retained in our custody till March 31, 1933, and were returned in due time after they were faithfully transcribed by Srijut Mahendranath Phooquon, who also prepared in this connection an Assamese alphabet with the help of the various scripts preserved in the manuscripts. The three manuscripts were *Ghorar Vyadhir Puthi* or a treatise on the medicines for the ailments of horses, *Vocabularies of the Ashami and Camarupa Languages*, 1810, by Ruchinath Kamrupi, and an *Assam Buranji* from the death of Jayadhwaj Singha in 1663. A portion of the *Assam Buranji* has been inserted in our *Deodhai Asam Buranji*, paragraphs 286-290.

I. SANKHACHUR-BADH.—This is a gorgeously illustrated Assamese manuscript in verse belonging to the private collection of the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami, and was obtained through the courtesy of his son Srijut Saratchandra Goswami, B.A. The book was written by the reputed court-poet of Assam, Kaviraj Chakravarti in 1648 Saka or 1726 A.D. under the orders of King Siva Singha. It contains pictures of Gadadhar Singha, Rudra Singha, Siva Singha and his consort Phuleswari Devi, besides numerous love-scenes depicting the amours of Tulasi with her husband Sankhachur and Srikrishna disguised as her husband, and battles between the Devatas and Daityas. The two manuscripts *Hasti-vidyarnava* and *Sankhachur-badh*, both compiled under the orders of the same monarch, represent the two best Assamese manuscripts discovered hitherto, judged from the intrinsic quality

of the text, neat penmanship, the richly painted illustrations depicting the court-life of the sovereigns of Assam, as well as their splendid colour-effect. The publication of these two manuscripts with the illustrations will involve an expenditure of at least one lakh of rupees.

J. RAMGOPAL CHARIT.—This manuscript was obtained from Srijut Chintaharan Patgiri, Head Master, Barnagar M.E. School. It contains the life of the Vaishnava preacher Ramgopal who counted among his disciples Lachit Barphukan, the great victor of Saraighat. The book was written in 1721 *Saka* or 1799 A.D. by one Jaynarayan. It has been transcribed by Srijut Basudev Misra of the Department's staff.

K. DUTIRAM HAZARIKA'S MANUSCRIPTS.—Through the courtesy of Rai Saheb Srijut Sonadhar Das Senapati, Registrar, Assam Secretariat, retired, the Department has obtained possession of two manuscripts by Dutiram Hazarika, whose metrical chronicle of Assam constitutes the major portion of our *Asamar Padya-Buranji*. The first one is a metrical extravaganza depicting the origin and evils of the several drugs, tobacco, *bhang* or hemp, opium, *dhutura* or thorn-apple. Their first existence in heaven and their subsequent introduction among mortals have been described with hilarious fun. The poem will be a useful instrument in the hands of temperance workers. The second book is *Burhabhashya* recording an imaginary conversation between the great Vaishnava reformer Sankardev and his chief apostle Madhabdev on the subject of devotion to God.

L. HARA-GAURI SAMVAD.—This manuscript has been borrowed from the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti. It deals with the geographical divisions of India followed by a short chronicle of ancient Kamarupa from Narakasur. Each Sanskrit verse of the book is followed by an Assamese rendering. The contents suggest lines of enquiry, but they can never be accepted as conclusive historical evidence. It has been transcribed by Srijut Basudev Misra.

M. DIARY OF A TOUR IN UPPER ASSAM, 1838.—Capt. Francis Jenkins during his tour in Upper Assam in January to March 1838 maintained a regular diary recording his observations on the administration of Raja Purandar Singha and the economic condition of the people. Col. Jenkins's accuracy of observation is illustrated in passages like this,—'All the villages round Jorehath have a good number of betel-nut trees, but all are of full growth, or approaching to decay, as I do not observe anywhere a single young tree growing up to supply those which must soon perish. The neglecting to raise young betel plants is one of the surest signs

we have that the people do not consider themselves comfortable'. The volume was borrowed in June 1933 from the Assam Secretariat Record Room with the permission of Mr. W. A. Cosgrave, then Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam. A typewritten copy has been prepared for the Department by Srijut Madhabchandra Barooah.

N. MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTION.—In addition to the above we have obtained several manuscripts,—*Bidhi-puthi* in Ahom from Srijut Hiteswar Barbarua; *Janma-patrika* from Srijut Dambarudhar Bardaloi; *Bihu-patrika Ganana* from Srijut Bangsidhar Bardaloi.

O. HEMCHANDRA GOSWAMI COLLECTION.—In addition to *Sankhachur-badh* the Department has, through the courtesy of Srijut Saratchandra Goswami, B.A., obtained possession of ninety manuscripts belonging to the private collection of his father the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami. Mr. S. C. Goswami has, besides, made a free gift of the almirah where his father used to keep the manuscripts. The manuscripts are in Sanskrit and Assamese, and they represent different branches of Indian and Assamese literatures,—drama, epic poetry, Pauranic poetry, lyric poetry, erotics, metaphysics, aphorisms, homilies, rituals, biography, medicine, arithmetic, astronomy, astrology, etc. Two of the manuscripts are in Uriya character written on the usual palm-leaf folios. The manuscripts are named below :

- (1) Sankhachur-badh Nat; (2) Chor-chakravarti; (3) Gita-Govinda; (4) Harischandra-upakhyan; (5) Patra-kaumudi; (6) Sindhura-parva; (7) Yogini-tantra; (8) Gita; (9) Gita-Govinda Tika; (10) Namghosha; (11) Yogini-tantra; (12) Swatwat-tantra; (13) Sankhachur-badh; (14) Chaitanya-lila; (15) Yogini-tantra; (16) Gita-Govinda; (17) Durgotsav-bidhi; (18) Dipika-chanda; (19) Santi-parva; (20) Vaidya-sashtra; (21) Sankar-charit; (22) Chaitanya-nirnaya; (23) Abhishta-puran; (24) Sila-parva; (25) Hara-Gauri Samvad; (26) Katha-Bhagavat; (27) Yogini-tantra; (28) Katha-Bhagavat, Canto X; (29) Sriram-kirtan; (30) Sat-sampradayar Katha; (31) Prabodh-chandradaya Natak; (32) Ankia Nat; (33) Gita; (34) Nrisimha-kriya; (35) Swapnadhya; (36) Bhakti-ratnavali; (37) Aswamedh-parva; (38) Dharma-puran; (39) Bhagavat, Canto IX; (40) Swatwat-tantra; (41) Kalika Puran; (42) Gopal-Ata Charit; (43) Santa-nirnaya; (44) Sivaratri-bidhi; (45) Mantra Puthi; (46) Gita-Govinda; (47) Guru-tatwa; (48) Annada-kalpa; (49) Vaidya-kalpadrum; (50) Daravar Puthi; (51) Dak-bhanita; (52) Bhakti-ratnavali; (53) Bhagavat, Canto III; (54) Striparva; (55) Kurukshetra-yatra; (56) Bhavishyat-samgraha; (57) Chanakya; (58) Gita-Govinda; (59) Gita-Govinda; (60) Gita-Govinda Tika; (61) Rati-sashtra; (62) Brahma-Vaivarta Puran; (63) Karma-phal; (64) Nama-malika; (65) Yogini-tantra; (66) Brahma-Gita; (67) Santa-charitra; (68) Barah-puran; (69)

Kumar-haran; (70) Gita-Govinda; (71) Smarta-Sanskara-bidhi; (72) Sankar-charitra; (73) Kusadeva-charitra; (74) Namghosha Mul; (75) Udyog-parva; (76) Yogini-tantra; (77) Mandala-dhyaya; (78) Brahman-sarvaswa; (79) Ankar Puthi; (80) Uttara-kanda Ramayan; (81) Jayadrath-badh Nat; (82) Abhimanyu-badh Nat; (83) Damodar-charitra; (84) Gangajal-Salagram Nirnaya; (85) Gita-samgraha; (86) Hara-Gauri Samvad; (87) Jyotish-churamani; (88) Uriya Puthi; (89) Uriya Puthi; (90) Vaidik Samvadini Pustika.

P. NAZIRA COLLECTION, SUPPLEMENTARY.—In addition to the manuscripts mentioned in paragraph B above the following have been obtained from the Nazira Bezbarua family,—

(1) Swapnādhyāya; (2) Jyotish; (3) Ayurveda; (4) Chikit-sarnava; (5) Jyotish-sara-samgraha; (6) Amarkosh.

Enormous amounts of material still await discovery in various odd corners of India. It is sad, I think how not hundreds, but thousands of neglected manuscripts are in possession of people who have not perpetuated the learning and attainments of their ancestors. Insects, the borer, and the white-ant are the sworn enemies of all this literature, and so are the monsoon and its attendant mildew and moisture. Every year they destroy a vast amount of the ancient literature of the country. Happily, within the last few decades, private, institutional and Government agencies have started to collect the manuscripts in earnest, but funds are often insufficient, specially when it is a question of stepping in at the right moment to save important books at a comparatively small outlay.—*Mr. Johan Van Manen, General Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*

PART IV.

Opinions and Remarks.

Sir Edward Gait, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., author of 'A History of Assam'.
—I am delighted to learn that the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies has been established in Assam, and hope it will prove a real success. I shall be glad to give every help in my power as a Corresponding Member.—May 5, 1930.

The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies is doing very valuable work in publishing the *Buranjis* and similar old records and in stimulating the interest of the people of Assam in the past history of their country.—June 26, 1933.

The Hon'ble Maulavi Saiyid Sir Mahammad Saadulla, Kt., M.A., B.L., Finance Member to the Government of Assam.—Many thanks for your *Assam Buranji* kindly presented to me. I hope the establishment of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies will enrich the Province in literature and history.—June 16, 1930.

Mr. J. R. Cunningham, C.I.E., Director of Public Instruction, Assam, 1912-31.—*Kamrupar Buranji* seems to be an excellent piece of work. I hope that it will be appreciated in Assam and that the Department of Historical Studies will be encouraged to further enterprise. Your reference to me is most kind.¹ But I was only the instrument of one, Suryya Kumar Bhuyan.—December 8, 1930.

I have been very much interested by the perusal of the first Bulletin of your Department—an impressive record—and appreciate the friendly spirit which led you to credit me with so prominent a part in its establishment; the fact is of course that had it not been for one S. K. Bhuyan, the Department would never have come into being, and were it not for the abilities and devotion of the same S. K. Bhuyan it would have had but little to record in the way of accomplishment.—April 5, 1932.

Mr. J. Barooah, Barrister-at-Law, Principal, Earle Law College, Gauhati.—I acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of a copy of *Assam Buranji* and a copy of *Kamrupar Buranji* sent by you for this library. They are valuable additions to our history and literature.—December 11, 1930.

¹ Reference was made to Mr. Cunningham in the Preface to *Kamrupar Buranji*, pp. v-vi.—'I shall fail in my duty if I do not record in this connection the gratitude of all students of Assam history to Mr. J. R. Cunningham, C.I.E., whose initiative and instrumentality brought the Department into being'.—S. K. B.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Kt., C.I.E., formerly Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University.—*Kamrupar Buranji*, of which you have published a scholarly edition, will be very useful to students of Assam history and, to a limited extent, to those of the history of the Mughal Empire. I shall use your *Kamrupar Buranji* when I have occasion to prepare the next edition (4th) of my *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, which deals with Assam.—April 3, 1931.

Mr. Johan Van Manen, C.I.E., General Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bengal.—I was glad to have your letter and delighted to hear that you have succeeded in collecting a large number of Ahom manuscripts, especially as a qualified Deodhai has been engaged to assist in translation and description. This is indeed of importance and gratifying.—April 5, 1931.

Lt.-Col. P. R. T. Gurdon, C.S.I., I.A. (Retd.), sometime Officiating Chief Commissioner of Assam.—Your Department has done, and is doing, much good work and it is a great satisfaction to me to learn that the work of historical research in the Province, commenced by Sir Edward Gait, and continued during my time, by the late Srijut Hemchandra Goswami, and yourself amongst others, is making such really good progress.—June 7, 1931.

I write to acknowledge, with very many thanks, receipt of your interesting Bulletin of the Assam Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies from which it is evident that you and your Department are not letting the grass grow under your feet. That the Governor, Sir Laurie Hammond, has been good enough to contribute a Foreword is a specially gratifying feature. It seems that the Governor has taken a great personal interest in historical and antiquarian research work, so it is all the more to be regretted that he is so soon to leave the Province. We must hope that the next Governor will be equally interested in the work.—March 21, 1932.

Srijut Rohinikumar Chaudhuri, B.L., Advocate, Calcutta High Court, and Member of the Assam Legislative Council.—I acknowledge with grateful thanks the receipt of a copy of *Assam Buranji* and *Kamrupar Buranji*. I have found them very useful and I have no hesitation in saying that they are valuable additions to the histories of Assam. The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, which has published them, has, in my opinion, amply justified its existence, and it ought to receive every encouragement from the Government and the public. Thanks are due to the great pains taken and sacrifices made by Prof. S. K. Bhuyan.—December 16, 1931.

Srijut Rajanikanta Bardaloi, B.A., Extra Assistant Commissioner (Retd.).—Professor S. K. Bhuyan under the guidance of Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck has been doing yeoman's service. Two invaluable Buranjis, *Assam Buranji* and *Kamrupar Buranji*, have been printed, four more are in the press, and several more have been transcribed and edited, and a large number of historical manuscripts and transcripts collected,

including some Ahom puthis, such as the one on Muga cloth pieces with ornamental borders. To transcribe, edit and publish the Assamese puthis and transcripts alone would take several years. The result, I am sure, will place at the disposal of the public a voluminous mass of information with the help of which constructive works on the social, religious, political and economic history of the Province can be written in future. The Department requires a separate house where the staff will be able to work at them which requires seclusion, space and repose. I congratulate Mr. Bentinck, the Honorary Provincial Director, and his Assistant Prof. S. K. Bhuyan on the splendid work achieved within so short a time.—November 20, 1931.

Srijut Lakshminath Bezbaroa, B.A.—I am delighted to go through a copy of *Assam Buranji* by the late Harakanta Barua Sadar-Amin, and a copy of *Kamrupar Buranji*, compiled from old Assamese manuscript chronicles, both so ably edited by Professor S. K. Bhuyan, M.A., B.L., Honorary Assistant Director, and published by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam. They are scholarly editions. I am sure they will be very useful to the students of Assam history as well as the history of the Moghul Empire. It is now quite evident that the establishment of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies was a move in the right direction. My heartfelt gratitude goes to those who were instrumental in bringing the Department into being.—January 7, 1932.

Srijut Nagendranarayan Chaudhuri, Zamindar, Mechpara Estate, Goalpara ; President of the 13th Session of the Assam Literary Conference ; and founder of the Assamese monthly 'Awahon'.—I have had an opportunity of seeing some of the historical manuscripts, both Ahom and Assamese, that the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies has collected. I have been amazed at the wealth of historical masterpieces which are to be found in the Assamese and Ahom languages, and a large collection of which has been made by the Department. Their value in any enlightened community will be immense. The Department has published two chronicles and has in the press four more, besides several others ready for the press. I am glad to see the fulfilment of the impetus imparted to the recovery and publication of historical manuscripts since the unearthing of the chronicle obtained from my father-in-law the late Srijut Keshabkanta Singha Juvaraj through the efforts of Rai Bahadur Bhubanram Das, Sir Edward Gait and Srijut Hemchandra Goswami. The Department has also adopted steps for teaching the Ahom language. The public of Assam should be grateful to the Government for instituting organized measures for historical research by the establishment of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. The activities of the Department deserve every encouragement and sympathy from the Government and the public. I congratulate the Government on its having selected Prof. S. K. Bhuyan as Honorary Assistant Director of the Department, who by his equipment, ability, enthusiasm, long

experience and natural aptitude, is eminently fitted for this work. I am delighted to find that Prof. Bhuyan is leaving no stone unturned to make the Department a success even at enormous personal sacrifice. The Government by establishing the Department has removed a long-felt want in Assam specially when we know that elaborate measures have been taken by other provinces in historical pursuits. I have all admiration for what the Government of Assam is doing for the cultural uplift of the people.—January 12, 1932.

Annual Bibliography of Indian Archæology, Volume III, published by the Kern Institute, Gravenstein, Leyden, Holland, entry No. 324, under heading 'Assamese Historical Literature'.—It is not yet enough known that Assam (quite distinctly from other parts of India) possesses a considerable amount of historical chronicles, called *Buranjis*,—a fact already appreciated by Sir George A. Grierson. Prof. Bhuyan classifies them as follows : (1) Desultory chronicles of the Hindu kings of Kamrupa, from Bhagadatta to the conquest of Assam by the Ahoms, a Shan tribe, in 1228 A.C. (2) Chronicles of the Ahom kings of Assam from 1228 to the termination of their rule in 1826, continued up to 1838 A.C. or even later. (3) Chronicles of countries other than Assam. It may be added that only one *Buranji* has been published so far, but the Assam Government have taken steps to arrange for further publications.

Srijut Hiteswar Barbarua.—I am much delighted to have a copy of the first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. Here runs my heartfelt gratitude to you for the uncommon contribution you have been making to the Department. Being in the midst of academical drudgeries it is almost a wonder to me how you manage all these. The future of a country is built more or less on the plinth of the past; I am so happy to feel that in you there are makings of a good builder of our poor province.—March 7, 1932.

Srijut Benuddhar Sarma.—Words fail to give out my admiration at the receipt of the Bulletin of the D.H.A.S. It is unique and historic. You must deserve all the congratulations for your laudable attempts and indefatigable work. The concluding paragraph of your report is unparallelly illuminating; as a matter of fact, these lines prove your fervent desire for turning the lazy and cheerless Assamese into an energetic and historical race.—March 9, 1932.

Times of Assam.—There are nations or countries with hardly any background of the past, historical or traditional. Other lands there are where in the past was made history. To the latter category belongs Assam. From the points of view of history, mythology, ethnology or religion there is hidden in the past of this province materials that have yet to be brought into light and utilized. It may be noted in this place that Assam is the only province in India with a distinct Government department specifically entrusted with the pursuit of historical and antiquarian research over and above the

one engaged in ethnographical investigations. We hope the Department will earn wide interest and co-operation of the public and we wish it every success.—March 19, 1932.

Babu Puranchand Nahar, M.A., B.L., Vakil, Calcutta High Court.—I thank very much for kindly sending me a copy of your valuable Bulletin. The difficult work of historical research you are carrying certainly deserves the unstinted praise from all scholars.—March 20, 1932.

Mr. J. P. Mills, I.C.S., M.A.—The first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies reached me on tour, and is of great interest. You have accomplished a lot and your foundations are well laid. Your programme fills me with anticipation. May I wish you all good fortune for the future and a swift emergence from the financial clouds that now engulf us.—March 23, 1932.

Thank you so much for sending me the *Deodhai Asam Buranji* and *Tunghhungia Buranji*. I am glad to see such concrete proof of the vigour of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies.—January 15, 1933.

I thank you for your very interesting book (*Tunghhungia Buranji* or *A History of Assam*) you so kindly sent me. It is so fascinating that I could not put it down and stayed up far later than I ought to have done one night reading it.—November 22, 1933.

Lt.-Col. Sir Wolsely Haig, K.C.I.E., C.M.G., C.S.I., Editor of 'Cambridge History of India', Vol. III, 'Turks and Afghans'.—I am very grateful to you for sending me the first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies of Assam, which I have read with much interest, and which I hope to find time to review in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies of the University of London. The promotion and encouragement of such studies by the Government of an Indian province, and the careful preservation and classification of historical records, are a great service to students of Indian history.—April 4, 1932.

Sir Wolsely Haig's review in the 'Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies', London Institution, University of London, Vol. VI, Part 4, p. 1085.—In the preface to this admirable publication it is modestly admitted that Assam has not hitherto been classed, in popular estimation, among the most progressive of the provinces of India. Other provinces would, however, do well to follow in its footsteps in pursuing the objects, with which the Government Department which publishes this, its first Bulletin, is concerned. The origin and objects of the Department are set forth at length in Part I of the Bulletin, and may be briefly epitomized as the preservation of what is perishable and the careful classification and study of everything perishable or imperishable, which can throw any light on the history, the archæology and the anthropology of a most interesting and certainly no longer 'benighted' province. The report on this section of the Bulletin

covers the period from July 1929 to December 1931. It is excellent and encouraging reading, for it recounts what valuable work the Department has already done, and makes it clear that it is but at the beginning of its labours. Much that is perishable and has too often in the past been regarded as negligible has been preserved, and much material for the history of Assam has been collected, and the efforts of the Local Government in this direction will be gratefully appreciated by all scholars and students.

The Department is organized on the most economical principles. The work of those who conduct its activities is a labour of love, and it has a list of distinguished honorary correspondents, ex-officials and others, many of whom are known far beyond the limits of Assam for their scholarship.

The *Bulletin* has been compiled by Prof. S. K. Bhuyan, M.A., B.L., Honorary Assistant Director of the Department, whose illuminating preface throws much light on the antecedents and origin of the Department, and is preceded by a foreword contributed by the Governor of the province, Sir Laurie Hammond, K.C.S.I., C.B.E., whose hope, that this first *Bulletin* will be followed by many more, all interested in the history of India will share.—June 1932.

Professor Dr. Max Walleser, Goethestrasse, 12, Heidelberg, Germany.—I beg to acknowledge having received a copy of Bulletin No. I of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, India, and I am specially glad to the study of Ahom language and literature by which a lamented gap in the study of Tibeto-Chinese culture will probably be filled.—April 4, 1932.

Sir George Abraham Grierson, O.M.—I am much obliged to you for the Bulletin No. I of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam. I have read it with the greatest pleasure and much instruction, and am happy to see the interest that is being taken in the history and antiquities of the province. Certainly your Bulletin shows that far greater progress has been made in these researches than I was previously aware of.—April 5, 1932.

M. Louis Finot, Chev. de la Legion d'honneur, Professor, College de France, Toulon, Var, France.—I have perused with much interest the first number of your Bulletin, which you have so kindly sent me. I was delighted to hear of this new departure in the field of Assamese studies taken with an excellent programme and the best hopes of substantial results. It requires a true courage to launch a scientific series in these unhappy days. May the success reward your gallant enterprise.—April 6, 1932.

Sir William Foster, C.I.E., Superintendent of Records, India Office, London.—I am obliged by your courtesy in sending me a copy of the first Bulletin issued by the Department of Historical Studies, Assam. I have perused it with much interest. I wish the Department all success in its praiseworthy efforts to elucidate the history of the

province, and should any opportunity occur of making its work known, I shall gladly take it.—April 6, 1932.

Mr. E. J. Rapson, Professor of Sanskrit, Cambridge, Editor of the 'Cambridge History of India', Vol. I, 'Ancient India'.—Please accept my best thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy of Bulletin No. I of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. This first number of a publication, which will place on record the progress of research in the history and anthropology of a most interesting province, is most welcome. Sincerely wishing the Department all possible success in its efforts.—April 6, 1932.

Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, C.S.I., Joint-Editor of the 'Indian Antiquary'.—I have to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a complimentary copy of Bulletin No. I of your Department. It is indeed gratifying to read the record of steady work that is being carried out in your province in furtherance of the scheme so wisely inaugurated by Sir Charles Lyall and Sir Edward Gait. With all good wishes for the work ahead.—April 9, 1932.

Lt.-Col. L. A. Waddell.—I thank you for the copy of the Bulletin No. I of your Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam which you have so kindly sent me. I find it very interesting in recording the little known historical manuscripts of Assamese of the past few centuries. I hope you will be able to find archaeological remains of two or three thousand years ago of the prehistoric period of the Ahoms in caves or shrines or elsewhere. Should you do so I trust you will kindly send me particulars.—April 16, 1932.

Dr. Surendranath Sen, M.A., Ph.D., Asutosh Professor of History, Calcutta University.—I have gone through your Bulletin and found it very interesting and useful. You have indeed earned the gratitude of all serious students of Indian history by rescuing these valuable sources from oblivion.—May 12, 1932.

Amrit Bazar Patrika.—The brochure is the Annual Report (Bulletin No. I of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam) of the work of the Department which, though recently inaugurated, is doing valuable work relating to researches into Assam antiquities of which much is not known to the rest of India, although prehistoric Assam has valuable materials throwing a flood of light on the characteristics of races and cultures of that province which is still historically an almost unknown book to many. Sir Edward Gait's 'History of Assam' is a mere fragmentary work, and cannot pretend to be an exhaustive account of historical Assam in its widest sense. Mr. Bhuyan, who has already given us some interesting materials in some of his articles contributed to periodicals from time to time, is rendering an invaluable service to those wanting light from Indian antiquities of the remote past, especially from Assam which has more materials of historical and archaeological interests than most of

us know of. The accounts of the various activities of the Department given in the Report under notice show that it is at present concentrating its attention on the publication of unpublished vernacular manuscripts and records of antiquities, and already it has succeeded in putting in the press five books in vernacular and two in English. It has also collected no less than 61 Puthis or manuscripts and 77 transcripts, and have undertaken publication of a number of other works. This is no mean achievement on the part of a Department which came into being only close upon three years back. It does our heart good to see so much valuable work done in such a short period which reflects credit on those associated with the Department. We doubt not the projects the Department has taken in hand deserve encouragement and support from Assam Government as also public at large.—May 17, 1932.

The Vaitarani, Cuttack, Vol. VI, Nos. XI and XII.—The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, Assam, has published its first bulletin of importance on the Report on the Work of the Department with a Handlist of Manuscripts and Transcripts. The list of Puthis and various other manuscripts is very valuable. Let us hope the new Orissa Government when created will immediately create such a department. Orissa is full of palm-leaf and other manuscripts.—July and August 1932.

Mr. Arthur Probsthain, 41 Great Russell Street, London.—Your valued letter, together with the first Bulletin of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, have just arrived and I beg of you to accept my great appreciation for both. I have noticed, with considerable interest, within recent years the great advance in scholarship, on sound European lines, in India, and in spite of it your Bulletin came as a great surprise to me, being of exceptionally high standard. The bibliographical work is absolutely perfect. I am looking forward to the second Bulletin, which you were good enough to mention would also be posted to me when ready.—March 23, 1933.

Progress of Education in Assam, 1927-28 to 1931-32.—Professor S. K. Bhuyan of Cotton College carried on his historical researches with unwearied labours. All the leisure at his disposal was devoted to giving a definite shape to the activities of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, which was established in 1928 mainly at the instance of Mr. J. R. Cunningham, then Director of Public Instruction. Through the ceaseless efforts of the workers and the continued encouragement of the Government the Department has now acquired a sound footing and enlisted the co-operation and sympathy of all sections of the public. A large number of historical manuscripts and transcripts have been collected, two chronicles published and four more sent to the Press. The first Bulletin of the Department, compiled by him, has recently come out of the Press with a Foreword by His Excellency Sir Laurie Hammond, Governor of Assam. Professor Bhuyan's work has deservedly received high

commendation from experts. Twelve articles or books have been compiled by him during the year 1931-32.—*Quinquennial Review* by Mr. S. C. Roy, I.E.S., M.A. (London).

The Director, National Library of Peiping, Peiping, China.—May we write to ask if it would be possible for you to present us with copies of your Bulletin noted below? Our attention has been recently called to this publication, and as there is no doubt that it would be of much service to us, we sincerely hope that you could comply with our request. It will be most gratefully received and your courtesy highly appreciated.—March 27, 1932.

Srijut Upendranath Barooah, Jorhat.—I thank you heartily for offering me a copy of the Bulletin No. I of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam. The programme of work set forth there is varied and embracing; and as an earnest of the attempt in that direction you have ably and learnedly edited the *Kali-bharat Padya-Buranji* and the *Tungkhungia Buranji* which are interesting as much as history as early example of Assamese language. I was very glad to find you working at home early and late. There can be no doubt that you will be able to bring to light many ancient relics of this important Province, which have hitherto remained a sealed book to the outside world. God willing you are the right man for this laborious business. I hope the Government of Assam will see to place your services entirely to this useful work unhampered by College duties.—August 16, 1933.

The Statesman.—For his history of the last Ahom dynasty (*Tungkhungia Buranji* or *A History of Assam, 1681-1826 A.D.*) the author has successfully adopted an ingenious plan. The bulk of the book is a translation of a chronicle written by Srinath Duara Barbarua in the early years of the 19th century. This, however only covers the years 1751 to 1806. Professor Bhuyan has therefore prefixed a compilation from old Assamese records of the events from 1681 to 1751, and at the end adds an outline of Assamese history down to 1826. The story opens fairly enough with the freeing of Assam from the Moguls and the consolidation of the royal power after a period of anarchy. But degeneration soon began and the tale is a melancholy one of intrigue, horrible cruelty and shameless cowardice. Men ready enough to remove the eyes and knee-caps of a helpless captive or fry him alive in oil fled at the distant sight of an armed enemy. Things were soon hopeless, and in 1792 Captain Welsh had to be called in to defeat with fifty men the Moamaria rebels who for years had defied the King of Assam, the 'God of Heaven'. But the improvement was only temporary. The rulers of Assam were rotten to the core and plotting traitors called in the Burmese, under whom Assam suffered torments or oppression. The British again had to intervene to end it, and with it the independence of Assam. A deposed king, Purandar Singha, was replaced on the throne as a protected prince, but in three

years he had defaulted in his tributes and turned the country into a hot-bed of corruption. All *Buranjis*, or Assamese histories, are loaded with names, for they are as much histories of the various noble families as of the realm as a whole. But this is no dull chronicle. Apart from being a gold mine for the student of torture it gives us countless glimpses of the ceremonies, embassies, feasts, hunting, and all that went to make up the life of the period. The Introduction containing a clear outline of Assamese history and the full Glossary of Vernacular Terms is a very valuable piece of work indeed.—December 10, 1933.

Mr. T. P. M. O'Callaghan, C.I.E., I.P., Inspector-General of Police, Assam.—I write to acknowledge with much appreciation receipt of your complimentary copy of *Tungkhungia Buranji* and I will read it with great pleasure, not only for its contents but also in view of your thoughtfulness.—December 21, 1933.

Mr. D. E. Roberts, I.E.S., M.Sc., Officiating Director of Public Instruction, Assam.—May I offer you my congratulations on *The History of Assam* recently published as a result of your labours? I am not competent to appreciate more than its intrinsic interest, but I can and do admire the energy and application that you have devoted, in the midst of your regular routine duties, to these historical studies.—December 23, 1933.

Journal of the Assam Sahitya-Sabha, Jorhat.—We have been delighted to read the valuable preface of the editor and publisher for which we express our admiration of him. This *Assam Buranji*, coming up to 174 pages, accompanied by a preface and other things, neatly printed and systematically edited, has added to the reputation of Mr. Bhuyan, Honorary Assistant Director of the D.H.A.S.—Vol. V, Nos. 3-4. Translated.

The editor deserves the thanks of the entire Assamese public for bringing out the book *Kamrupar Buranji* in an extremely systematic manner. We also express our admiration for the ability of the editor.—Vol. V, Nos. 3-4. Translated.

Awahon, Assamese monthly, Calcutta.—Through the efforts of Prof. Bhuyan the Assamese community have become familiar with a large mass of historical facts. The *Tungkhungia Buranji*, published as a result of his unwearied labour for several years, has enriched the stock of Assamese historical literature. Prof. Bhuyan's reputed experience has come out very well in the editing of the book. The Assamese community cannot but express their gratefulness for such a contribution of his to our historical literature. We are grateful to the Government for providing funds to the D.H.A.S. which have enabled the Department to bring out this book.—Vol. IV, No. 8. Translated.

Prof. Bhuyan has added an elaborate preface in English which will enable the reader to understand the main facts embodied in the

book *Deodhai Asam Buranji*. He deserves our thanks for having published previously a large mass of information on the antiquities of Assam as well as a number of manuscripts. We express our gratefulness to Prof. Bhuyan for publishing this book in such an excellent manner.—Vol. 5, No. 3. Translated.

Metrical chronicles are really rare in all languages except the ancient epics Mahabharat, Ramayan, and a few other poetical treatises on Pauranic subjects. It is a matter of pride that chronicles were written in Assamese verse a hundred years ago. Prof. Bhuyan is, indeed, entitled to the admiration of the whole Assamese community for having brought this lovely specimen of our historical literature. The printing and binding of the book *Asamar Padya-Buranji* are really very attractive.—Vol. IV, No. II. Translated.

Address presented to Prof. S. K. Bhuyan, editor of 'Asamar Padya-Buranji', by the Assam Baniya Samaj.—In obedience to the injunction of the entire Baniya community of Assam, I address this communication to you, together with our thanks to the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies of the Government of Assam for printing and publishing *Asamar Padya-Buranji*. By this, you have not only effected the enrichment of Assamese history and of our mother-tongue, the prestige and honour of those who belong to the same community as its author Dutiram Hazarika—a loyal friend of Swargadeo Purandar Singha and of his son Kamaleswar Singha—have also been enhanced by this publication. The members of our community offer you the blessings of their simple hearts for bringing to light their literary attainments as revealed in *Asamar Padya-Buranji*—a community now practically immersed in obscurity and oblivion.—Rai Sahib Sonadhar Das Senapati, Secretary, Assam Baniya Samaj, September 20, 1933. Translated.

Awahon, Assamese monthly, Calcutta.—Assam has no separate University. Till then there will be no scope for investigating into the ancient history of our land in an efficient manner. The treasures which Prof. Bhuyan has unearthed under the auspices of the Government in face of difficulties entitle him to the admiration, not only of the Assamese, but of the Indians as well. The Assamese public should give him all kinds of help in this work in order that he can expand the scope and activities of the D.H.A.S. We are sure that this Department will serve as the nucleus of the future University of Assam.—Vol. III, No. 6. Translated.

The Batori, Jorhat.—We thank the Assam Government for establishing the D.H.A.S. and appointing a competent person like Prof. Bhuyan as its Assistant Director; and also for making it possible for Mr. Bhuyan to recover within these few years a number of very precious manuscripts dealing with politics, geography, commerce, astrology, history, etc. We feel proud in the success and ability of Prof. Bhuyan. The profusion of ancient manuscripts in Assam has

no parallel in any other country. We have not to take recourse to hearsays and legends in writing the history of Assam. One would be astonished to think that we have in Assam a mass of chronicles where very minute details are recorded.—June 4, 1932. Translated.

There is an organization in Assam known as D.H.A.S. Through the labour and enterprise of Prof. Bhuyan it has published a number of precious old Buranjis, and has thereby assisted not only in the discovery of new facts, but has also led to the advancement of our national literature.—December 30, 1933. Translated.

On the retirement of Mr. Bentinck, the first Director of the D.H.A.S., Prof. S. K. Bhuyan has been appointed to succeed in his place. The Assamese public are fully aware how Mr. Bhuyan has worked heart and soul for the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies during the last five years. We are extremely delighted that an Assamese gentleman has been appointed Director for the first time. We are specially gratified that Government's selection has fallen upon a competent Assamese like Prof. Bhuyan. He has devoted himself whole-heartedly to the cause of historical research since his student days. We thank the Government for providing funds to promote investigations into the history and antiquities of Assam.—February 3, 1934. Translated.

Asamiya, Assamese bi-weekly, Gauhati.—We are extremely delighted to see that Prof. S. K. Bhuyan has been appointed Honorary Provincial Director of the D.H.A.S. in place of Mr. A. H. W. Bentinck, the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Division. The Assamese public are fully aware how Prof. Bhuyan secured the establishment of the Department with the help of Mr. J. R. Cunningham, and how he has worked in a self-sacrificing spirit for its advancement. Assam has no University. We are greatly pleased that Government have adopted efficient measures for the prosecution of historical research in a systematic manner. We thank the Government for having appointed a competent person like Prof. Bhuyan and for spending money for bringing to light the treasures elucidating the ancient history of Assam. We earnestly desire that with the help of the Assam Government and through the efforts of Prof. Bhuyan the name of Assam will become famous, and our countrymen as well as foreigners will have a better knowledge, understanding as well as respect for the Assamese. The office of the Director of the two Departments, Ethnography, and Historical and Antiquarian Studies, was hitherto confined to British officers of the status of Deputy Commissioners and Commissioners. The entire Assamese public are highly gratified to see that the Government have, this time, appointed an Assamese to the office of the Director.—February 6, 1934. Translated.

The Statesman, Calcutta.—Mr. Surya Kumar Bhuyan, who has been appointed Honorary Director of the Department of Historical

and Antiquarian Studies in Assam, is the first Indian to hold the appointment. Assam is perhaps the only province in India which possesses a distinct Government Department for the pursuit of historical and antiquarian research,—a task which would have formed part of the legitimate activities of a University had there been one in the province. The establishment of the Department in 1928, mainly through the exertions of Mr. J. R. Cunningham, then Director of Public Instruction, is 'the culminating factor of a long series of measures which the Government of Assam have, in spite of limited resources, adopted from time to time, since the days of Major-General Francis Jenkins, for the advancement of knowledge of the history and anthropology of the various races and peoples of the province'. During the five years of its existence, the Department has published a number of historical works, mostly old Assamese manuscripts rescued from oblivion, the latest publication being an English version of a Chronicle of the Ahom Kings of the Tungkhungia Dynasty. Mr. Bhuyan is of opinion that the publication of the historical works will place at the disposal of students of history a large mass of materials throwing light on pre-British Assam, particularly on the conflicts between Assam and the invading forces of the Mogul Emperors of Delhi.—January 30, 1934, under caption 'Assam's History: Activities of Research Department'.

D.H.A.S. APPEAL FOR FUNDS.

The work which the Department is doing at present will form part of the legitimate activities of the research section of the future University of Assam, where they will render the necessary incentive to teachers and students for the attainment of higher degrees and academic laurels. Till then historical research in Assam will be confined to a handful of scholars who have natural aptitude for the same having realized the unlimited field of historical investigations yet unexplored. As for some years to come they are going to be a practically unprofitable concern from the strictly economic point of view, the munificence of the state and of private gentlemen will have to come to the rescue of historical pursuits.

But we are fallen on evil days. The financial embarrassments of the Government have crippled our activities to a great extent and will do so for years to come.

In our misfortune may we not count upon the sympathy of the generous public of Assam in our exertion to resuscitate the past history of the land? When we remember that historical investigations have thriven only under the patronage of the wealthy in the East as well as the West, we hope our countrymen will come and help us in wading through the present period of financial stringency.

We want money to acquire for the Department a local habitation of its own where we can deposit our historical documents, and in whose secluded and reposeful rooms private scholars as well as the literary workers of the Department may carry on the work of research and compilation.¹

We want money to acquire some valuable historical manuscripts which we have been able to trace.

We want money to publish the more valuable of the historical manuscripts and transcripts we have already collected.

We want money to engage and remunerate reputed scholars for the compilation of historical works the necessity for which has been felt in all quarters.

We want the philanthropic public to come forward with ear-marked donations for the undertaking of any project which will lead to the advancement of historical knowledge.

¹ Our prayer for donation for a building has received generous response from the great philanthropist Rai Bahadur Radhakanta Handiqui of Jorhat.

Government of Assam.



Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies.

Honorary Provincial Director :

PROF. S. K. BHUYAN, M.A., B.L.

Honorary Assistant Directors :

MR. J. P. MILLS, I.C.S., M.A. (Oxon.),
for the Surma Valley Division.

MR. A. F. S. AHMED, M.A.,
for the Brahmaputra Valley
Division.

'The Assamese are justly proud of their national literature. In no department have they been more successful than in a branch of study in which India, as a rule, is curiously deficient. The historical works, or *Buranjis*, as they are styled by the Assamese, are numerous and voluminous. According to the custom of the country, a knowledge of the *Buranjis* was an indispensable qualification to an Assamese gentleman.'—*Sir George Abraham Grierson, Linguistic Survey of India.*

'The Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies is doing very valuable work in publishing the *Buranjis* and similar old records and in stimulating the interest of the people of Assam in the past history of their country.'—*Sir Edward Gait, June 26, 1933.*

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE.

The Department has published several old Assamese historical masterpieces, edited on most up-to-date lines by Professor S. K. Bhuyan. Each book is furnished with Preface and Introduction in English and Assamese; an exhaustive Table of Contents; and Marginalia against every paragraph; and *Asamar Padya-Buranji* has, besides, an elaborate Synopsis in English. Publication No. 6, viz., *Tungkhungia Buranji: A History of Assam, 1681-1826 A.D.*, is the first English translation of an Assamese chronicle. Publications Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8 have been printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta.

1. **ASSAM BURANJI**.—A History of Assam, from the commencement of Ahom rule to the British occupation of Assam in 1826, being an enlarged version of the chronicle of Kasinath Tamuli Phukan, by the late Srijut Harakanta Sarma-Barua Chaudhuri Sadar-Amin. Prescribed as a text-book in Assamese Vernacular for the Intermediate Examinations in Arts and Science of the Calcutta University. Published in May 1930.

Pp. xxii+152. Preface in English, pp. i to v; Preface in Assamese, pp. vii to xiii. Cloth bound, with gilt letters on front and spine, price Rs. 2-8 per copy; and paper bound, Re. 1 per copy.

2. KAMRUPAR BURANJI.—A History of Kamarupa, from the earliest times to the cessation of hostilities with the Moguls in 1682 A.D. The book contains a detailed contemporary account of the conflicts with the Moguls, and of the early relations of the Moguls with Assam and Cooch Behar, with 18 contemporary epistles between the Ahom and Mogul courts. The appendices to the book contain valuable accounts of Kamarupa compiled from the manuscript records of Buchanan-Hamilton, etc. With a contemporary portrait of Nawab Mir Jumla. Prescribed as a text-book in Assamese Vernacular for the B.A. Examination of the Calcutta University. Published in November 1930.

Preface in English, pp. i to vi; Preface in Assamese, pp. vii to xii. Pp. xvii+152. Cloth bound, with gilt letters on front and spine, price Rs. 2-8 per copy; and paper bound, Re. 1 per copy.

3. DEODHAI ASAM BURANJI.—A History of Assam, from the earliest times to the accession of Jayadhwaj Singha in 1648 A.D., written in conformity with Ahom traditions, being the translation of an old Ahom Buranji; with a number of shorter chronicles,—*Bahgaria Buragohain's Buranji*, compiled by Atan Buragohain Rajmantri Dangaria, Prime Minister of Assam, A.D. 1662 to 1679; *Datiyalia Buranji* or an account of the Ahom relations with neighbouring chieftains; accounts of the ceremonies of Ahom marriages, hawk-flights and burials; an account of the official functions of Daivajnas or astrologers; early history and traditions about the Koches, Kacharis, Jayantias, Chutias, Naras; conflicts between the Nara and Mantara; the first Ahom sovereign Swarganarayan, and the Mikirs; with a complete list of Ahom Kings and a table for converting *Laknis* or years of the Shan Aijepi calendar to their corresponding Hindu *Sakas*. Published in February 1933.

Text with marginalia, pp. 1 to 222; Preface and Introduction in English, pp. iii to liv; Introduction in Assamese, pp. lv to lxx. Cloth bound, price Rs. 3 per copy.

4. ASAMAR PADYA-BURANJI.—A Metrical Chronicle of Assam, comprising, *1st*, Dutiram Hazarika's *Kalibharat Buranji* or a History of Assam from the accession of Sulikpha Ratnadhawaj Singha Lora Raja in 1679 to the transfer of the territories of the Honourable East India Company in 1858; and *2nd*, Bisweswar Vaidyadhipa's *Belimarrar Buranji*, from Captain Welsh's expedition to Assam in 1792 to the victory of the Burman forces at Khagarijan or Nowgong in 1819. Published in January 1933.

Assamese text with marginalia, pp. 1 to 278; Synopsis in English, pp. 279 to 308; Preface and Introduction in English, pp. iii to xvi; Introduction in Assamese, pp. xxix to lv. Cloth bound, price Rs. 3 per copy.

5. TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI.—Assamese Version. A chronicle of the Ahom Kings of Assam of the Tungkhungia Dynasty, being the Chronicle of Srinath Duara Barbarua with prefatory chapters collated by the editor. From the accession of Gadadhar Singha to the eleventh year of the reign of Kamaleswar Singha, 1681 to 1806; with an account of the period of disruption, 1671 to 1681. Contains valuable accounts of the reigns of Gadadhar Singha, Rudra Singha, Siva Singha, Pramatta Singha, Rajeswar Singha, Lakshmi Singha, Gaurinath Singha and Kamaleswar Singha. Published in December 1932.

Assamese text with marginalia, pp. 1 to 186; Preface and Introduction in English, pp. iii to xxvii; Introduction in Assamese, pp. xxxv to xlvii. With four-coloured contemporary portraits of King Siva Singha and his Queen regnant Maharani Amvika Devi. Cloth bound, price Rs. 2-8 per copy.

6. TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI.—A History of Assam, 1681 to 1826 A.D. English translation of the above by Prof. S. K. Bhuyan, with supplement bringing down the history to the end of Ahom rule in 1826. With Introduction, Genealogical Tables, Bibliography, Glossary and Index. Published by the Oxford University Press for the Government of Assam in the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. Published in November 1933.

Pp. xxxii + 262. Preface, pp. vii to xii; Introduction, pp. xv to xxxii; Genealogical Tables, pp. 224 to 227; Bibliography, pp. 228 to 232; Glossary, pp. 233 to 245; Index, pp. 246 to 262. Cloth bound, Rs. 10 per copy.¹

7. BULLETIN NO. 1.—With an Introduction by His Excellency Sir Laurie Hammond, Governor of Assam, 1927-1932. Report on the Work of the Department from July 1929 to December 1931. In three parts: Part I, Report on the Work of the Department; Part II, Handlist of Manuscripts; Part III, Handlist of Transcripts. Published in February 1932.

Pp. viii + 48. Price Re. 1 per copy.

8. BULLETIN NO. 2.—With an Introduction by His Excellency Sir Michael Keane, Governor of Assam. Report on the Work of the Department from January 1932 to February 1934. In four parts: Part I, Historical Research in Assam; Part II, Origin, Objects and Activities of the D.H.A.S.; Part III, D.H.A.S. Collection of Manuscripts; Part IV, Opinions and Remarks. Published in March 1934.

Pp. xii + 76. Price Re. 1 per copy.

The above books can be had of:—

SRIJUT BASUDEV MISRA, B.A.,
ASSISTANT, D.H.A.S. OFFICE,
GAUHATI, ASSAM, INDIA.

¹ *Tungkhungia Buranji: A History of Assam, 1681-1826 A.D.*, can be had of the publishers,—Oxford University Press, Mercantile Buildings, Lal Bazar Street, Post Box No. 530, Calcutta.